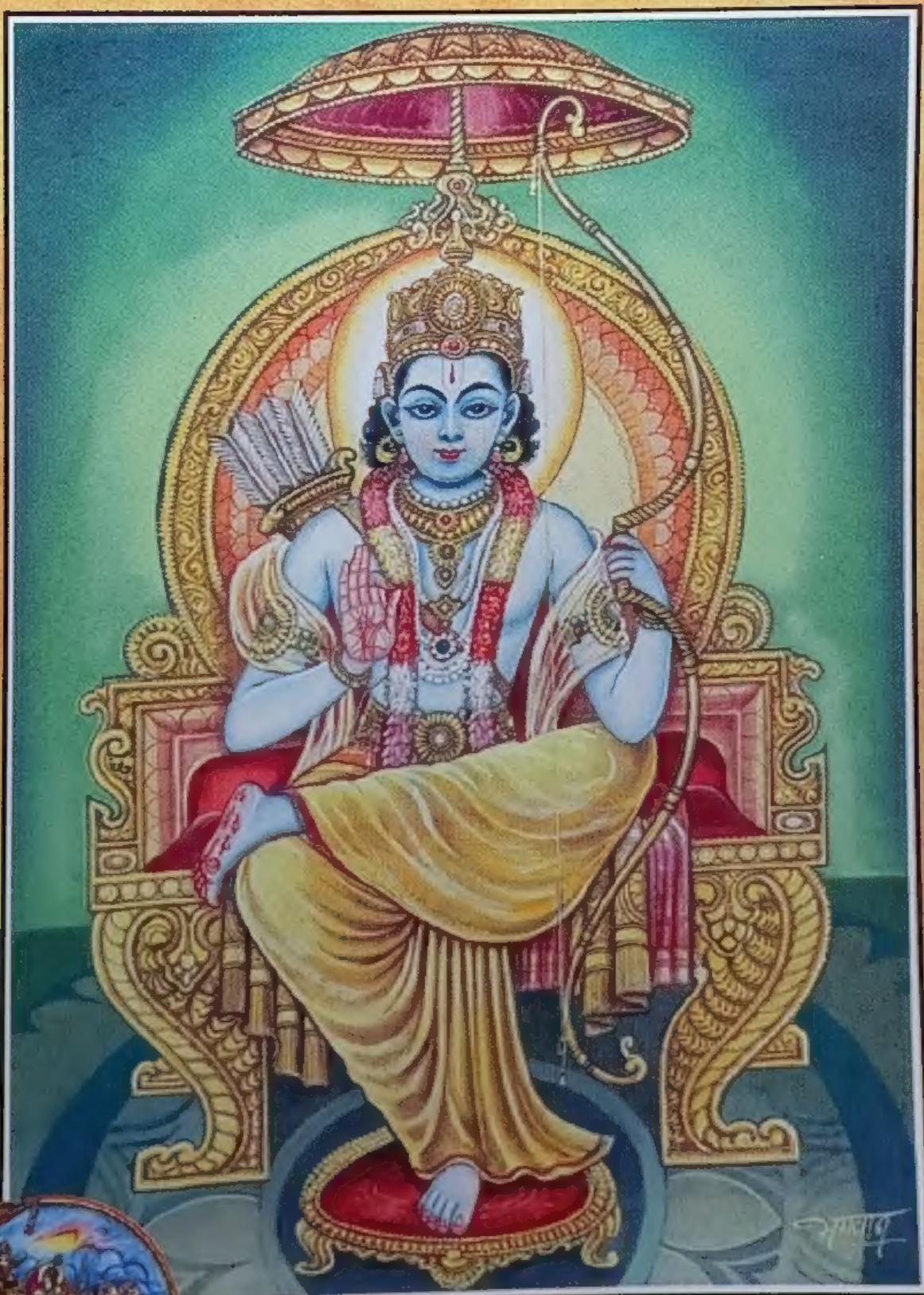


Gems of Truth

(Second Series)



Jayadayal Goyandka

॥ Shri Hari ॥

Gems of Truth

(Second Series)

tvameva mātā ca pitā tvameva
tvameva bandhuśca sakhā tvameva
tvameva vidyā draviṇam tvameva
tvameva sarvam mama devadeva

By
Jayadayal Goyandka

(Translated into English by the Editorial
Staff of 'The Kalyana-Kalpataru')

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Foreword

The present volume comprises the second series of articles by Syt. Jayadayal Goyandka, published from time to time in the columns of the 'Kalyana-Kalpataru'. As mentioned in my introduction to the first series, the articles were originally written in Hindi for the 'Kalyan' and were subsequently translated into English for the benefit of the English Knowing public. The warm reception accorded by the public to the first series has encouraged us to publish this second series, which I hope will be similarly welcomed. It goes without saying that like its precursor it will prove to be a handy and valuable manual for those who have an earnest desire to tread the path of God-realization and stand in need of a permanent guide to help them along the path.

Although no pain has been spared to bring out the sense of the original as faithfully and correctly as possible, the translation is anything but perfect and on behalf of the translators I crave the indulgence of the readers for the many shortcomings which will be noticed therein. On behalf of the publishers as well I would add a word of apology for any misprints that may have inadvertently crept in.

With these few words of introduction, I would recommend the volume for a careful study by all those who are interested in spiritual culture and seek to be benefited by the considered views and ripe experience of an illumined soul who has not only realized what he says but who actually lives up to those ideals.

Hanumanprasad Poddar
Editor, 'Kalyan'

The Duty of Man

A careful study of the modern mind will make it evident that in the present age people, in general, are in a way opposed to spiritual development. Such men are really few and far between who are in earnest about Self-realization. Even of those few people who strive for it, a large majority know not how to proceed on. Want of faith and devotion has made even real guides rare. Thanks to the times and environment in which we are living and the peculiarity of our nature, some of us are not able to translate our ideas into action in spite of our desire to practise self-discipline. The main cause responsible for this is ignorance combined with absence of faith in God, the scriptures and the great sages of yore. But nobody can make a gift of this faith or Śraddhā. Association with those possessing this Śraddhā and austerity, sacrifice, charity and worship of God, practised in a disinterested spirit, are some of the means of purifying the heart, and it is only the pure in heart that are blessed with faith in scriptures and life after death and love for God and God-inspired men. A man is what his Śraddhā is. In this life as well as the next Śraddhā is his only support. The *Gītā* says :—

सत्त्वानुरूपा सर्वस्य श्रद्धा भवति भारत।
श्रद्धामयोऽयं पुरुषो यो यच्छ्रद्धः स एव सः ॥

(XVII. 3)

“Arjuna, the faith of the each is shaped to his own mental constitution. Faith constitutes the very being of man; therefore, whatever the nature of his faith, that verily he is.”

Therefore, one should try to acquire true faith.

In whatever name or form of God you repose your faith, you will undoubtedly be considered to have faith in Him; for

all names and forms are His. You may repose faith in and follow any religion which appeals to you; any Ṛṣi, Mahātmā or God-inspired man who is worthy of credence to you. All that is needed is Śraddhā or faith. God, religion and life after death etc., or things which can only be believed for the main part. It is after repeated efforts and hard unceasing struggle that one obtain a direct perception of these truths. For the realization of these higher truths one cannot do without reposing faith in someone, at least, in the beginning. If one does not do so, he is sure to turn an atheist and deviate from the path of blessedness. Nay; he will never enter the path of God-realization and will go down in the scale of spiritual evolution.

If you do not believe in any particular religion, scripture or the utterances of saints and sages of old, you should certainly believe at least in the teachings of *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*. For the teachings of the *Gītā* are in harmony with the teachings of almost all the different religions of the world.

If you do not believe even in the *Gītā*, you should repose faith in God according as you have conceived of Him and, surrendering yourself to Him, apply yourself in right earnest to the work of Self-realization. Supposing you doubt even the existence of God, you should select the best man of the age and arm yourself with sufficient courage to follow in his footsteps.

If you cannot repose faith in any saint or great man of the present age, you should pause to consider whether there is no one superior to you in the whole world so far as the knowledge of the path of blessedness is concerned. If you allege that such men do exist but you have not yet come across any such person, it is your duty to find them out; or if you think that there are many people superior to you but people who can ably instruct you in the Law of Higher Life are few and far between and those few who exist are not easily accessible to men lacking

in faith and cannot be recognized even if we happen to meet such persons, having not the eyes wherewith to recognize them, it is essential for you to consider whether the sort of life you are leading is conducive to your true well-being. If you are satisfied with what you are doing, you should at least exert yourself more and more for your advancement day by day. You should cultivate virtues like serenity, self-control, fortitude, forgiveness, composure of mind, contentment, truthfulness and compassion, should practise Japa, austerity, meditation and service, and give up vices like sloth, mendacity, sensuality, duplicity, thieving and adultery. Before undertaking any work one should carefully consider whether what he is going to do is really conducive of good to him and correct at once whatever defect appears to him therein. Human birth is rare gift. Even lacs of rupees cannot prolong one's life even by a minute. Such a valuable life should never be wasted in sleep, lethargy, idle pursuits and indolence. Any one who passes his time listlessly is bound to come to grief. A Hindi poet has beautifully said—

“One who takes up any work without due consideration of its pros and cons surely comes to grief. Not only does he spoil the work and become an object of laughter in the eyes of the world, but he loses his peace of mind, and the pleasures of the world lose all charm for him, Giradhara, the poet, says that the laws of Karma are inexorable. A work done without due consideration pricks the heart like a spike.”*

* बिना बिचारे जो करे सो पाछे पछिताय ।
काम बिगारे आपनो जगमें होत हँसाय ॥
जगमें होत हँसाय चित्तमें चैन न पावै ।
खान पान सनमान राग रंग मन नहिं भावै ॥
कह गिरधर कबिराय कर्म गति टरत न टारे ।
खटकत है जिय माहिं करे जो बिना बिचारे ॥

One should, therefore, take particular care to employ his time to the best advantage according to his discretion, so that he may not have to repent afterwards. One has to pay a very high price for obtaining human birth. One has to do so many things in the course of one single life, which is very short. Hence one should wake up and be wise enough to devote the rest of his life to work conducive to one's highest good.

If one does not engage according to his light and knowledge in works which are beneficial to him, here as well as hereafter, it will be nothing short of height of folly, indolence and sloth on his part. He who does not withdraw his mind from idle pursuits, lethargy and enjoyment of sense- objects and put it on the right track and proceed along the downward path, is his own enemy. The *Śruti* says—

इह चेदवेदीदथ सत्यमस्ति न चेदिहावेदीन्महती विनष्टिः ।
भूतेषु भूतेषु विचित्य धीराः प्रेत्यास्पाल्लोकादमृता भवन्ति ॥

(Kenopaniṣad 2.5)

“It is well and good if one realizes Him in this very life—if, on the contrary, one fails to know Him in this life, he will be a greater loser. Men of strong determination who seek for the Lord in every creature attain immortality on casting off this body.”

One has to tread this path of self-evolution by himself, no one else can do it for him. Therefore, the only wise thing for him is that he should be vigilant every moment of his life and, exercising self-control, should devote himself whole-heartedly to practices which insure his permanent good here as well as hereafter. Idle pursuits, lethargy, enjoyment of sense-objects and immoral practices ought to be given up as the greatest stumbling-blocks on this path, *Śruti* exhorts as follows—

| | | | |
|-----------|-------------|---------|---------------|
| उत्तिष्ठत | जाग्रत | प्राप्य | वरान्निबोधत । |
| क्षुरस्य | धारा | निशिता | दुरत्यया |
| दुर्ग | पथस्तत्कवयो | | बदन्ति ॥ |

(Kathopaniṣad 1. iii. 14)

“Arise, awake and approaching great souls, receive instruction from them. The wise say that the road is difficult to tread; it is like treading on the sharp edge of a razor.”

But, because the road is very difficult, one should not lose heart. By fixing one’s mind on God, one can easily surmount all difficulties through His grace—

‘मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।’

The Lord further says:—

दैवी ह्येषा गुणमयी मम माया दुरत्यया ।
मामेव ये प्रपद्यन्ते मायामेतां तरन्ति ते ॥

(Gītā VII. 14)

“For this wonderful illusion of Mine consisting of the three guṇas (Modes of Nature) is extremely difficult to get over; those, however, who take refuge in Me alone, cross it.”

To visualize the Lord at all places and in all things, constant unfailing remembrance of God and acting according to His commandments constitute self-surrender to God. This is also called one-pointed and exclusive devotion (अनन्य भक्ति) to the Lord.

Therefore, to take refuge in God is the foremost duty of those who believe in God. One who completely surrenders himself to Him can never perpetrate anything which is opposed to the will of the Lord. He attains a state which is beyond all fear; he is completely rid of grief and infatuation. He enjoys everlasting peace which nothing can disturb and his bliss knows no bounds. This ineffable state of his, cannot be understood or explained to others through example,

words or signs. When even those who have attained such a state are unable to describe it, how can others do it? Mind and speech have no access there. It can only be experienced through one's purified intellect. This is what the Vedas and the Śāstras say—

एष सर्वेषु भूतेषु गृहोत्मा न प्रकाशते ।
दृश्यते त्वग्रथया बुद्ध्या सूक्ष्मया सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः ॥

(Kaṭhopaniṣad 1. iii. 12)

“Concealed in all beings, the Ātmā does not manifest itself. It can only be perceived through the pointed and subtle intellect, by men of subtle sight”.

The Lord Himself says—

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यज्ञद् बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥

(Gītā VI. 21)

“Nay, in which the soul experiences the eternal and supersensuous joy which can be apprehended only through subtle and acute reason, and wherein established the said Yogi moves not from Truth.”

Every human being should endeavour to attain this state; it is the paramount duty of all.

Our Duty

If we turn our attention to our duty, in most cases it will be found that we are lacking in diligence in the performance of it. A careful scrutiny will reveal defects at every step. Although all men crave for progress, and consider it desirable to put forth their best effort for the same, an examination will reveal many predisposing causes which stand in the way of their making the effort. Not only so, but being at their wit's end as to what to do, they fall from the real path to progress.

Therefore at the outset it should be thrashed out what is man's duty, how he should attempt to carry out the same, and what are the obstacles on account of which he cannot make the best of effort, in spite of his desire to do the same.

Man's first and foremost duty is to elevate his Self. The Lord says, "Man should elevate himself by the Self, he should not cause the Self to go down".* It should be, therefore, considered what is the self's elevation, and wherein lies its degradation.

"Gradual increase, in the present and in the future, within oneself, of (spiritual) knowledge, (supreme) happiness, (unbroken) peace and the spirit of impartial justice is elevation of the self, and contrary to this, turning of the mind towards ignorance, error, unrest and injustice, is degradation of the Self.' Forming constantly the habit of self-examination, man should devote himself to the effort at self-elevation and restrain himself from act that leads to degradation. In this world, association is the

* उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत्।

(Gītā VI. 5)

primary cause of the soul's elevation or degradation. Association with him who has already elevated himself or is established in the path of spiritual elevation, is helpful to the soul's elevation; and association with him who is already fallen, or is gradually leading towards a spiritual fall, fosters the soul's degradation. Therefore, it is proper to associate constantly with high and elevated souls.

He who is free from selfishness, arrogance, hypocrisy and anger, who does not seek honour, prestige or personal worship, whose conduct is exceptionally pure, whose sight and words lead to the advancement of love for, and faith in God, brings peace to the heart, and developing one's belief in God, the other world and spiritually pure scriptures inclines one towards blessedness, should be regarded a high and elevated soul. Holding as a model the flawless conducts of such high, saintly souls, whether dead or alive, one should imitate them, and carry out their behests, and regulate one's life by carrying out what appears to one's intellect as good and conducive to bliss and peace. The Law-giver Manu says—

वेदः स्मृतिः सदाचारः स्वस्य च प्रियमात्मनः ।
एतच्चतुर्विधं प्राहुः साक्षाद्दर्मस्य लक्षणम् ॥

(II. 12)

“The Vedas, Smṛtis, conduct of saintly souls, and action which brings satisfaction to the heart—these four are said to be direct marks of Dharma.”

Here the question arises: are there no means for those who do not believe in our Śrutis and Smṛtis? Is it necessary for all to have faith in the Śrutis and Smṛtis? Being a Hindu, though the Śrutis and Smṛtis are extremely dear to me, and I am partial to them, it can never be

reasonable if I assert that there can be no standard of right conduct besides the injunctions of the Śrutis and Smṛtis. An impartial consideration of the duty of man as a whole produces the conviction that the Lord and ruler of this universe is one and the same God. Almost all religious sects of the world, and schools of thought, cultivate faith in Him alone, in one form or another, and seek to draw their followers towards Him. Whatever books those sects and schools of thought regard as their holy scriptures, for them those very books are the scriptures, or authoritative books of their religion. For a person following a particular religion, adherence to all practices followed and advocated by the best ancient persons famous for their right conduct according to that religion, would be equivalent to following the scriptures. Such injunctions alone of the scriptures should be actually practised as appear good and beneficial to the intellect, when put to the crucible of reason. A man may be a good man, but we should imitate only such of his conduct as appear to our reasoning as best and highest. Such of his conduct as appear to us to be injurious, unworthy and of doubtful value should not be accepted as the standard of right conduct.

In case the association of a person, who has either already attained blessedness or has advanced towards blessedness, is not gained, or in case the heart recoils from the belief that anyone has attained to that state, one should pray to God for gaining the association of such a saintly soul, in the following strain— “O Lord, O Supreme Soul, O my Master, graciously bring me in contact with such great souls as are merged in Your Love with a sincere and devout heart.” If God is approached repeatedly with such prayer, through His grace the Sādhaka will

surely gain contact with a saint favourable to his sentiments.

Here, again, the question arises that he and he alone who has faith in God, can offer prayers to God. It is possible for believers in God to have faith in saints and in the scriptures. But what is the duty of one who believes neither in God, nor in life after death, nor in the scriptures, nor in the saints ?

The answer to this is that though the condition of such people is most deplorable, nevertheless they also can follow the means of their soul's elevation according to their light. Such people should seek contact with persons who appear to their reason as superior to them. In this world, both among confirmed idiots and the wisest of men, it is almost generally believed that there are people who are superior to them as well as inferior. Therefore holding him as ideal, who appears to one's reason as noble, highly discriminative, pure-hearted, possessed of right conduct as well as learning, one should disinterestedly imitate his good actions. If due to foolishness, conceit or any other reason, he fails altogether to regard anyone as superior to him, he should carefully put everything to the test of reason, and after proper discrimination what appears to his mind as conducive to blessedness, peace, felicity, public good, justice and righteousness should whole-heartedly accept the same, and act accordingly throwing away all considerations of self-interest.

In almost all men there are primarily two types of impulses— one leading upwards, that is tending to elevate the soul, and the second leading downwards, that is tending to bring about the fall of the soul. Between these two impulses, one's progress towards good induces one to devote oneself to good action, leads upwards; and that

impulse of indiscretion which through the ego etc., the repository of pairs of opposites like attraction and repulsion, drives one to commit low and questionable acts, leads downwards. Through discrimination, man wants to elevate himself; but the impulse of indiscretion forcibly dragging him away from the path of good, pushes him along the path of evil. That is why Arjuna put this question to the Lord—

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पूरुषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वाष्णोय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥

(Gītā III. 36)

“Now impelled by what, Kṛṣṇa, does this man commit sin even involuntarily, as though driven by force.”

In reply to this, the Lord said—

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्ध्येनमिह वैरिणम् ॥

(Gītā III. 37)

“It is desire, it is wrath, begotten of the element of Rajas, insatiable and grossly wicked; know this to be the enemy in this case.”

Proceeding further the Lord pointed out that it is enemies like desire etc., born of attachment in the form of attraction, which have extended their sovereignty over man's senses and the mind. Therefore, first, releasing the senses and the mind from their bondage, evil impulses like desire should be eradicated. It is within the power of the Sādhaka to do this. That is why the Lord said—

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।
मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्यो बुद्धेः परतस्तु सः ॥
एवं बुद्धेः परं बुद्ध्वा संस्तभ्यात्मानमात्मना ।
जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपं दुरासदम् ॥

(Gītā III. 42-43)

"The senses are said to be greater than the body— but greater than the senses is the mind. Greater than the mind is the intellect; and what is greater than the intellect is he (the self). Thus Arjuna, knowing that which is higher than the intellect and subduing the mind by reason, kill this enemy in the form of desire, that is hard to overcome."

According to these words of the Lord, man should attempt with greater and greater vigour to redeem his soul. Subduing the impulses of evil associated with the ego, consisting of pairs of opposites like attraction and repulsion, when the conscience or discrimination is awakened, everything is likely to be set right. This is performance of duty.

Now, it should be considered that although almost all men attempt to elevate themselves according to their light, their attempt does not meet with success. What are the principal obstacles which always hinder them from advancing along the path of progress? The answer to this is that due to evil association and evil habits they have raised so many obstacles, hence they cannot keep along the path of true progress. The following are the principal among them:—

(1) **Attachment**—The tendency of the mind which draws one to enjoyment of worldly things like food and dress and other objects of luxury, as sweet to the senses, is called attachment. Man understands through reasoning that adultery is an evil, a sin. It is injurious to both the body and intellect to use a particular article of consumption. But desire in the form of sense of enjoyment, clouding his discrimination, drags him to the commission of those evils. Being overcome by this attachment, the senses forcibly drag the mind and drown it in the ocean of worldly enjoyment (*Gītā*, II 60). This impulse of desire should

certainly be eradicated. To whatever objects the mind may be attracted, analysing their points of virtue as well as evil, one should oppose or renounce with all his strength, or through discrimination, what appears to be evil, or tending to bring suffering in the end, and welcome what appears free from evil and suffering.

- (2) **Hatred**—Transforming itself into anger, it destroys the power of reasoning as between right and wrong and forces man to commit whatever evil it likes. Just as when lust is roused, man can commit any form of crime, even so he will not hesitate to commit the greatest of crimes under the impulse of anger. Therefore, hatred should never be allowed to find a place in the heart. Whenever anger is roused against anybody, that very instant one should be forewarned and take recourse to discrimination. Action taken under the impulse of anger brings terrible suffering in future.
- (3) **Greed**—Men of discrimination have described greed as the begetter of sin. When greed is roused, thoughts of propriety and impropriety, truth and untruth cannot stand. To deceive and cheat others, to commit the most reprehensible acts for the sake of money become almost like a habit with the man of greed, it is most difficult for a man of greed, who regards accumulation of wealth as the object of life to earn virtue. Therefore, depending on God and the law of Prārabdha (action which has begun to bear fruit), greed should be renounced. Lust, anger and greed these three have been described in the *Gitā* as doors leading to hell, destructive of the soul (XVI. 21).

(4) Fear—When this appears man gives up fortitude and presently takes to sin. He who fearlessly proceeds along the path of equity and does not give up fortitude in the face of even the greatest of difficulties, does never suffer a fall, whether here or elsewhere. If God is visualized everywhere, then, fear can never exist; but through the practice of reasoning, holding fast to fortitude at heart, or even through recourse to heroism and courage, man can be fearless. Realizing this, one should always try to remain fearless. Unnerved by fear, one should never yield to wrong.

(5) Hypocrisy—Concealing the evils in oneself out of greed, fear or ignorance, in the interest of wealth, honour or prestige, to show good points which one actually does not possess, or to make special and impressive exhibition of one's small merits, is called hypocrisy. This evil is a great obstacle in the path of blessedness. Of all the principal causes which lead to a Sādhaka's downfall, this is particularly harmful. Evils like untruth, deceit, injustice etc., remain naturally hidden within the womb of hypocrisy. A hypocrite feels that he is cheating others, but as a matter of fact, he himself is cheated. Even meritorious deeds like performance of sacrifice, charities etc., done in a hypocritical spirit, get exhausted; not only so, in particular cases, the doer earns sin, instead of virtue. Therefore, a discerning man should carefully save himself from this evil. The present-day world is widely infected with this evil. It has become difficult to find a single person even among thousands, who may be totally free from the evil of hypocrisy.

The five evils mentioned above are the primary defects. But besides them we have formed many habits as compel us to fall from the path of good. Though perceived by reason as directly harmful, we do not want to give them up, because they appear pleasant in the beginning due to our insensibility. For instance—

- (a) Depending on another's support, leading the life of a parasite—He who is not self-dependent, who lives upon the earnings of another, or lives under another's protection, can never elevate his thoughts. He has to surrender his ideas to the ideas of his protector. There may be occasions when he will commit even the murder of his best thoughts. Through constant suppression of his ideas, the process of germination of new good thoughts stops and like the body, his reason as well as conscience become dependent on another. Therefore, one should try as far as possible, to be self-dependent.
- (b) Ordering others for one's physical comfort and enjoyment, or accepting service from others—This habit has made us both worthless and arrogant. It has almost destroyed the spirit of equality. Therefore, one should, as far as possible, never accept service from another for one's own comfort.
- (c) Spending money lavishly for one's comfort, enjoyment or self-advertisement—This is such a bad habit that on account of this attempting to earn money by questionable means, man suffers an all-round degradation. What wrong does not one, who is a slave to wealth, commit? Imitating the ways of men who are wealthier than us, we have so much raised our daily expenses, expenses of food, clothing and social practices like marriage etc., that our life has

become full of the greatest sorrow and unrest on account of the same. That is why we have come to regard no means of earning money as illegitimate. Irrespective of whether Dharma is lost, justice is murdered, or sufferings of the country, community or neighbours are aggravated, we must have our pockets filled. In this abnormal growth of the greed for wealth, in which considerations of justice or injustice have no place, the habit of indulging in unnecessary expenditure is a primary cause. He who suffers from greed of wealth cannot easily devote himself to spiritual discipline or the work of self-elevation. Therefore, man should attempt, as far as possible, to cut down his needs. He should bring down his expenditure, and spend only as much as is necessary for carrying on life. If he has a surplus of money, he should utilize it in the service of the poor, the indigent and the cripple.

- (d) Indolence, lack of diligence or wilful neglect of duty—Postponing the day's work for the morrow, and doing work in a half-hearted manner only, these are extremely bad habits. For one who is subject to these habits, it is extremely difficult to rise, whether in this world or the next. Time is short, the path is long. Before death comes, and the body becomes a prey to ailments, one should earnestly devote oneself to the performance of one's duty. The moment an opportunity presents itself for a virtuous deed, one should be prepared immediately to perform it with enthusiasm.
- (e) Disobedience to parents and other elders—This habit is on the increase nowadays, specially among the educated. Continuation of disobedience to the loving

behests of experienced elders is a great obstacle in starting one's march in the path of blessedness. Through the blessings of elders, longevity, learning, fame and strength are increased. From their words of advice laden with the wisdom of experience, we come to discern the way of providing for the means of life. Therefore, as far as possible one should be diligent in carrying out the wishes of the elders.

- (f) Indulgence in backbiting, praise and unnecessary tittle-tattle—Indulgence in reproach and praise of others, or unnecessary gossip, appears quite sweet to man. Among these scandal and gossip are the dearest. In reproach, praise and gossip loopholes are found for untruth, hatred and hypocrisy. Therefore, backbiting and unnecessary gossip should never be indulged in. Praise of another out of a selfish motive is also extremely bad. Attribution of excessive merits not present in a person, for serving some self-interest, is to deceive him. The praise of a man, in appropriate words, when it is desirable, does not lead to any harm to the offerer of praise.
- (g) Seeking honour or social prestige, and welcoming the same when received—Like the tickle of the ringworm, it is an extremely agreeable disease, which though appearing pleasant in the beginning is very painful in the end. Nowadays in exchange for the insignificant value of honour and fame, the greatest of our virtues and deeds have all been disposed of. Whatever good deeds man performs, he throws them away by surrendering them to his desire for name and fame. Though he who does good deeds even for honour, fame and prestige is better than the indolent, worldly-minded person, nevertheless in the

case of seekers of spiritual good, honour and fame do the greatest injury. Practices which may bring them attainment of the Parmātmā (God), the Gem or incalculable value, they lose in exchange for name and fame. Desire for name and fame is a terrible deep-seated, contagious disease which remains hidden within the inmost recesses of the heart. It is often found even in those who renounce wife, children and riches. Man cannot easily free himself wholly from this disease although he may realize by reason that it is an evil. The germ of this disease is spread over the whole world. Hardly even one among crores of people may be found to be free from this contagion. The total destruction of this craving takes place only when the truth about God is realized; but even before that through persistent effort it can be sufficiently brought under control. Therefore, one should ever persevere in the attempt to bring about its destruction. In this effort also care must be taken that there may not grow, in return, improper obstinacy as well as hypocrisy.

Avoiding the main hindrances mentioned above, he who attempts to elevate the soul may attain success in the end. Now, shortly, those chief practices also should be known, from which great help is derived in the uplift of the soul, and which are the main constituent part of duty.

- (1) Associating with saintly souls, and studying the purest scriptures, their meritorious deeds and teachings should be imitated and adopted.
- (2) Faith in the existence of God should be cultivated. The more faith in God increases, the more will the defects begin to disappear automatically. The stronger

becomes faith in all pervading god the greater will be the elevation of the soul. Just as before the rising of the sun, through his mere distant indication alone, darkness disappears; so, even before one takes refuge in God, through mere development of faith in Him, sin gets uprooted and destroyed. On the growth of the belief that God is always and everywhere present, man can never and under no circumstance, be guilty of the commission of sin.

- (3) Surrendering oneself to God, Japa of His name should be constantly practised disinterestedly and with spirit of Love, whatever Divine Name appeals to one's heart, that very name is particularly beneficial to him. From whatever Name a person derived benefit, he sang its glory in the highest of terms. This should not lead one to the error that a certain Divine Name is superior and other Names are inferior. When an impartial view is taken, all Names of God would appear to be equally powerful. That which is the object of one's worship, or dear to his heart, is the best so far as he is concerned. Through one's imagination, and according to sectarian belief, differences may be created, though in reality they are non-existent. Therefore, those who do not practise Japa of the Divine Name should take to the Japa of whatever Name appears dear to them, and those who already practise Japa of a Name should, without introducing any change, increase, with the spirit of devotion and Love, their practice of Japa of that very Name.
- (4) Meditation on a form of God should be practised. Whatever be the object of one's worship, or howsoever God may have been perceived through

one's imagination, one should constantly keep the mind engaged in meditation of that very form or idea of God. This much of belief, however, should be resolutely held in the mind about God that He exists, He is present everywhere, He is knower of every heart, He is Almighty, all-pervading, possessed of all Divine virtues, all knowing, primeval, eternal and the supreme Lover, greatest friend, best, the nearest of relations and the Supreme Teacher. Greater than He in respect of these virtues, or even His equal, there has been, or is none in the world, nor ever can be.

- (5) Through the mind, speech and body such efforts as appear to reason to be highly beneficial for spiritual good should be constantly made disinterestedly.
- (6) Strictness should be observed in carrying out what has been comprehended as duty. There should be no lapse in the performance of duty out of greed, fear, selfishness ignorance or any other reason whatsoever.

These six are worthy of being understood as Duty, in the special sense of the term. All these I have written, in short, according to my ordinary understanding. It is possible, they may not appear worthy of consideration, or there may be other ideas superior to them. According to his light everyone should find out what is beneficial to him, and act in conformity with the same. Whatever appears undisputedly good to the intellect should never be renounced under the influence of any attachment whatsoever, beyond this, what else can man do? He who tries to elevate the self with the help of discrimination and reason, generally attains success. And one who surrendering himself to God, takes to the practice of a discipline in search of

God, according to his own lights, regarding that to be an inspiration coming from God, is assured of success. Out of twenty-four hours of the day and night, man should generally spend six hours in the practice of Yoga, or performance of spiritual duty, six hours in earning livelihood by legitimate and righteous means, six hours in taking care of the body and six hours in sleep.

Necessity of Dharma

The unanimous verdict of the Vedas, Śāstras and the Purāṇas is that the universe rests on Dharma (the Divine Law), that Dharma alone fulfils human life. That Dharma alone guards man against sins and ushers him into a higher life; nay, it is Dharma alone which enables the soul to cross the great ocean of pain in this as well as the next world, both of which are full of woes. This is also corroborated by the utterances of saints and godly men as well as by the conduct of great men. The authors of Hindū Śāstras and Hindū Saints have proclaimed this truth with great emphasis, while other nationalities too have always accorded a high place to religion. All of them have recognized their strength in Dharma alone. So far it has been held in all quarters that without Dharma a man's life is reduced to the life of a beast. But of late a new current of thought has set in the world. Whereas in the past Dharma was regarded as one of the principal means of edifying our life, some people have now begun to look upon it as a cause of our degeneration.

Some years ago it was published in certain newspapers that, pressed by the Anti-God Society of Russia, the Soviet Union issued a proclamation forbidding its members to join any religious function. Prior to this we had never heard of God being thus tabooed by ordinance. Of course, in Purāṇas we come across instances of such open defiance of God by Demon king like Hiranyakaśipu who persecuted his own child, Prahlāda, for the latter's devotion to Śrī Hari. Even in the kingdom of Rāvaṇa whose rule has become synonymous with a rule of terror, perhaps there was no such ordinance

against belief in God. Otherwise how could a God-loving soul like Vibhīṣaṇa live in that kingdom ! True, from time immemorial there have been people who have denied the existence of God; but they, too never denounced Dharma. The greatest unbelievers have espoused the cause of righteousness and observed the laws of morality even with a view to making the world happy. The conception of Dharma might have differed with the different people at different times, but the canons of Dharma have been followed in every country and by the people of every nationality.

This anti-religious movement is not progressing in Russia alone but the seeds of it have been sown even in other parts of Europe, as well as in America, Asia and Africa and among Christians, Buddhists and Mohammedans alike. What is to be regretted all the more is the fact that even in our own country, which has always regarded religion as its very life, some people, who are ignorant about the true nature of God and Religion, have begun to allege that "Dharma alone has brought about our ruin, that it is Dharma which has robbed the country of its independence and made us a subject nation, and that Dharma and Dharma alone is the main obstacle in the path of our all-round progress." Those who profess and believe like that look upon all believers in God and Religion as deluded fools. They are not able to realize their own mistake and it is rather difficult for them to do so; for, when a man begins to look upon himself as the wisest and most learned of all, he does not appreciate even the best advice offered to him by anyone else, which is conflicting with his own views. One cannot say what will be the result of this anti-religious movement, although scriptural evidence as well as inference and reasoning lead us to conclude that this will land the country into a great woe. A man who does not recognize any Dharma becomes licentious and as the

number of such men increases the fire of hatred and animosity blazes forth, and the result is universal suffering.

Dharma alone makes a man self-controlled, courageous, forbearing, heroic, dutiful and a master of his senses. Dharma alone teaches us the virtues of compassion, harmlessness, forgiveness, commiseration, service, truthfulness and continence.

Lord Manu has recognized ten essential characteristics of Dharma, viz, fortitude, forgiveness, self-control, abstaining from theft, purity of mind and body, mastery of the senses, a pure intellect, wisdom, truthfulness and absence of wrath.¹

In the *Mahābhārata* it is said—

“Absence of enmity with all creatures, in thought, word and deed, compassion on all, and charity—these constitute the eternal Dharma of The virtuous.”²

The *Padmapurāṇa* has enumerated the following fundamental principles of Dharma, viz., continence, truthfulness, performance of the five daily sacrifices (पञ्च महायज्ञ)³, charity, practice of self-restraint, forgiveness, harmlessness, tranquillity and non-thieving.⁴

1. धृतिः क्षमा दमोऽस्तेयं शौचमिन्द्रियनिग्रहः ।
धीर्विद्या सत्यमक्रोधो दशकं धर्मलक्षणम् ॥

(VI. 92)

2. अद्रोहः सर्वभूतेषु कर्मणा मनसा गिरा ।
अनुग्रहश्च दानं च सतां धर्मः सनातनः ॥

(V.P. 297. 35)

3. The five daily sacrifices are देवयज्ञ (oblations to gods), ऋषियज्ञ (worship of the ancient sages and seer), पितृयज्ञ (libations of food water to the manes or departed souls), मनुष्ययज्ञ (offering food to human beings who are in need of it) and भूतयज्ञ (offering food to other creatures).

4. ब्रह्मचर्येण सत्येन मखपंचकर्तनैः ।
दानेन नियमश्चापि क्षान्त्या शौचेन वल्लभ ॥
अहिंसया सुशान्त्या च अस्तेयेनापि वर्तनैः ।
एतैर्दर्शभिरंगैस्तु धर्ममेव प्रपूरयेत् ॥

(Bhūmi-kh. 12. 46-47)

Now, is it possible for any nation or individual to be happy or progressive, who is a slave to mind and senses, lacking in intellect and wisdom, devoid of truth and forgiveness, impure in mind, speech and body, given to bloody acts, lacking in peace of mind, not practising charity, and given to usurping other's property? Is it not absolutely necessary for every nation or individual seeking advancement to possess these essential characteristics of Dharma ? Can a nation lacking in these fundamentals of Dharma prosper in the world? Let those who seek to destroy all traces of religion consider this question calmly as well as seriously and impartially only once and they will come to realize that Dharma is our sole companion and helpmate in this as well as the next world, that Dharma alone transports a man from the region of pain to the abode of bliss, from unreality to reality, and illumines our gloomy hearts. Dharma alone helps us in building character. Dharma alone can enable us to conquer the forces of unrighteousness. Dharma alone can eradicate wrongs and become instrumental in establishing rule of righteousness. The celebrated Pāṇḍavas possessed more of righteousness than of man-power, that is why they came out victorious. It was repudiation of Dharma which brought about the downfall of Rāvaṇa even though he was very powerful and owned a huge and finely equipped army. It was repudiation of Dharma again, which brought Kāṁsa into disrepute and precipitated his death.

The names of Mahārāṇā Pratāpa and Chatrapati Śivājī have been immortalized in the history of this country simply for their upholding the banner of Dharma. It was for the sake of Dharma that the brave sons of Guru Govind Singh cheerfully agreed to have themselves piled on a wall. It was to vindicate the cause of Dharma

that Mīrā Bāī quaffed poison. It was for Dharma alone that Jesus mounted the cross. It was for Dharma and Dharma alone that the Lord Buddha emaciated his body by penance. It was with a view to setting up a lofty ideal of Dharma that king Yudhiṣṭhīra declined to visit the blissful heaven without taking his faithful dog with him. That is why their names are still remembered with reverence, although they cast off their mortal frames hundreds and thousands of years ago. If Dharma is lost, everything is lost. If Dharma leaves us with all its accessories, it will become easier for evil-minded people to loot others' property and kidnap others' wives, to persecute the poor and to do whatever they like. The very idea of a world without Dharma is shocking to a thoughtful mind.

Hence those who have some regard for Dharma should gird up their loins to do all they can for the preservation of Dharma. They should apply themselves to the task of propagating religious literature, broadcasting pure ideas of Dharma and investigating and preaching the subtle truths of Dharma. At the same time they should gather such moral strength by practising Dharma that they may be able successfully to stem the tide of this anti-religious movement. Our Sanātana Dharma has no quarrel with other religions. The *Mahābhārata* says—

“That Dharma which is in conflict with another is Kudharma (bad religion). True Dharma is that which does not oppose any other religion.”*

We wonder how does the question arise of abandoning such a universal Dharma. In this connection we should

* धर्मं यो बाधते धर्मो न स धर्मः कुधर्मकः।
अविरोधात् यो धर्मः स धर्मः सत्यविक्रम॥

remember the following memorable words of Lord Manu—

“Neither one's parents nor one's son, wife or other relations stand him in good stead in the life beyond death. Dharma alone stands by him there. One's relatives leave his dead body like a log of wood or a clod of earth on the ground and come away to their homes; Dharma alone accompanies him after death. One should, therefore, gradually accumulate merit day by day to serve him in the next world, with Dharma by his side one crosses over even the insurmountable barrier of darkness.”*

* नामुत्र हि सहायार्थं पिता माता च तिष्ठतः ।
न पुत्रदारा न ज्ञातिर्धर्मस्तिष्ठति केवलः ॥
मृतं शरीरमुत्सृज्य काष्ठलोष्ठसमं क्षितौ ।
विमुखा बाध्यवा यान्ति धर्मस्तमनुगच्छति ॥
तस्माद्धर्मं सहायार्थं नित्यं संचिन्युयच्छनैः ।
धर्मेण हि सहायेन तमस्तरति दुस्तरम् ॥

(Manusmṛti IV. 239, 41-44)

True Happiness and the Means of Its Realization

The Evil of Materialism

Nowadays the majority of people, whether educated or uneducated, are engaged only in attempts for their material advancement, regarding worldly enjoyment as true happiness. They have become oblivious of the supreme truth that material enjoyment, derived from contact between the senses and their objects; is perishable, momentary and as its ultimate effect, pain in disguise.

Many of our modern western-educated friends who regard themselves as thoughtful, wise and experts in argument, through their association with Englishmen, and at the sight of the latter's love, for luxury and sensuality, are getting fascinated with the mirage of western civilization, neglecting our ancient, ideal civilization, through lack of understanding of the subtle truths of Dharma enunciated in the Vedas. The faith that the judgement, reasoning and wisdom of our ancient sages who possessed knowledge of the past, present and future were infinitely superior to that of ours, and that whatever means they have laid down for our growth and development were the best means for realizing true happiness, has almost disappeared from their hearts. There is need to convert such friends through argument, and attract them towards the ancient ideal. The welfare of us all lies in this.

Such friends, if they probe into the matter, will realize that in reality western civilization is ruinous to our country, religion, wealth, happiness, nation and our span of life on earth; and that it is due to its contact with this civilization that

our country, being led away from its time-honoured religious path, has taken to the present downward course. That is why our religious nation appears to be moving towards faint-heartedness and luxury, ideals unworthy of Āryas. It is nothing but a tragedy to expect true happiness from a civilization which is destroying even our worldly felicity.

A nation gets destroyed when it renounces its dress, language, customary food or drink, and standard of right conduct. It is most difficult to annihilate the existence of the nation which, while protecting these four, does not fall from its ideal. Therefore, we should make it a point to imitate the habits, dress and manners followed by our ancient R̄sis or sages only. Renunciation of one's own Dharma is under no circumstances proper. The Lord said in the *Gītā*—

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।
स्वधर्मे निधनं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥

(III.35)

“One's own duty, though devoid of merit, is preferable to the duty of another well performed. Even death in the performance of one's own duty, brings blessedness—another's duty is fraught with fear.”

The Hindu nation and the Hindu religion began to deteriorate, when the Hindus, during Muslim rule, began to imitate the habits and manners of their rulers. Within a short time, eight crores of Hindus got converted into Muslims. Men who were once protectors of the cow, Brāhmaṇas and temples now became their enemies. This was nothing but the evil effect of the imitation of Muslim culture and Muslim habits and ideas.

Till recently the English have been the rulers of the land. English education has been widely prevalent and still

prevails in every corner of the country. Contact with the English has gone on for over a century. That is why English dress, language, food and manners have been rapidly adopted by the people of our nation. Simultaneously Hindu religion and Hindu sentiment have been on the decline and the influence of Christianity has grown and is still growing. We are in the grip of this calamity even now, the statement requires no proof. Renunciation of national culture and sentiments in imitation to others has led to this inevitable result.

Therefore, all our people should strongly realize the fact that western culture and its imitation are in no way beneficial to us. They lead to the destruction of our religious sentiments, and making us run after material advancement, compel us to remain deprived of our true welfare.

True Happiness

Every intelligent person can, if he considers the problem, realize that through the attainment of birth as a human being, some exceptional gain must accrue to us. Food, drink, sleep, the joy of procreation and other forms of worldly enjoyment can be gained even in lower forms of life like that of beasts and insects. If the life of a human being is wasted only in the attainment of this joy, what do we achieve through the human birth? The supreme goal of human life is to gain that incomparable and true happiness, the like of which there is nothing in the world. That happiness is 'God-realization.'

Why Religious Practices are Ignored ?

But although this is so, regarding the possession of wealth, women, children and other form of sense-enjoyment only as supreme happiness, the majority of people remain

infatuated with them. Dutiful men who strive for real happiness are met with few and far between.

The Lord said—

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्गतति सिद्धये।
यत्तामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेति तत्त्वतः॥

(Gītā VII. 3)

“Of thousands of men some rare soul strives to realize Me; of those striving Yogīs, again, some rare one (devoting himself exclusively to Me) Knows Me in reality.”

According to this statement of the Lord, nowadays also among the few, who strive for the attainment of true happiness, scarcely any climbs up to the final storey of achievement. The majority of Sādhakas stop after pursuing a little practice. They cannot, therefore, raise themselves to a superior spiritual level. To my understanding, the following may be the cause of their lack of success—

- (1) Qualified propagators of this teaching are very few in the world. For men of renunciation, learning, and right conduct, capable of hard labour, and true saints alone, can be the propagators of this teaching.
- (2) Being satisfied with slight improvements Sādhakas do not feel any need for great spiritual efforts.
- (3) Some Sādhakas get tired after pursuing a little amount of practice. They find themselves at their wit's end considering their discipline to be of no particular benefit to them.
- (4) People generally lack faith in the attainment of true happiness, for as in sense-enjoyments, pleasure is not experienced in the initial stages of the spiritual practice. This contributes to lack of diligence in the practice.
- (5) Some people regard the attainment of this happiness as beyond their power, and therefore remain sunk in despair.

Besides these, some other causes also may be mentioned; but among them all, ignorance or lack of diligence alone is the primary cause. Man should, therefore, devote himself to the performance of his duty with care and diligence.

Means of Realization of True Happiness

The Śruti says—

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।
क्षुरस्य धारा निशिता दुरत्यया दुर्ग पथस्तत्कवयो वदन्ति ॥

(Kaṭhopaniṣad I. III. 14)

“Arise (strive for religious practice), awake (from the sleep of ignorance), and approaching the saints understand the path which the learned describe as difficult and hard to tread as the sharp edge of a razor.”

Therefore, not the least delay should be made in taking to the practice which leads to the attainment of supreme blessedness and supreme happiness in the form of God-realization. This is the highest duty of a human being; this is happiness in the greatest and truest form. Describing the glory of this happiness, the Lord says—

सुखमात्यन्तिकं यत्तद्बुद्धिग्राह्यमतीन्द्रियम् ।
वेत्ति यत्र न चैवायं स्थितश्चलति तत्त्वतः ॥

(Gītā VI. 21)

“Nay, in which the soul-experiences the eternal and super-sensuous joy which can be apprehended only through subtle and acute reason, and wherein established the said Yogi moves not from truth.”

Again—

यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः ।
यस्मिन् स्थितो न दुःखेन गुरुणापि विचाल्यते ॥

(Gītā VI. 22)

"And having obtained which he does not reckon any other gain as greater than that, and established in which he is not moved even by great sorrow."

Again—

तं विद्याददुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम् ।
स निश्चयेन योक्तव्यो योगोऽनिर्विण्णचेतसा ॥

(Gītā VI. 23)

"That state called Yoga, which is free from the contact of pain (in the form of transmigration), should be known. Nay, this Yoga should be resolutely practised with an unwearied mind."

Though the means for the attainment of this true happiness is somewhat difficult, it is not altogether impossible of being accomplished. Even if difficult, it becomes wholly simple, smooth and exceptionally easy, when one takes refuge in God. The Lord makes the definite promise in the *Gītā*—

मां हि पार्थ व्यपाश्रित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥
किं पुनब्राह्मणाः पुण्या भक्ता राजर्षयस्तथा ।
अनित्यमसुखं लोकमिमं प्राप्य भजस्व माम् ॥

(Gītā IX. 32-33)

"Arjuna, womanfolk, Vaiśyas (members of the trading class), Śūdras (those belonging to the labouring class), and even those that are born of the womb of sin (such as the pariah), taking refuge in Me, they too attain the supreme goal. What wonder, then, that the holy Brāhmaṇas (members of the intellectual or priestly class) and devout royal sages should attain it. Therefore, having obtained this joyless and transient human life, devote yourself to Me."

Therefore, with firm faith in God, and surrendering himself to God, let the Sādhaka strive to remove the

obstacles in the path of his spiritual progress, by adopting the following means—

- (1) Approaching a Mahātmā (saint) whom he considers to be the best from the point of view of conduct, renunciation and knowledge, the Sādhaka should submit himself to the former and begin with energy the practice of a discipline according to the saint's instruction. He should entertain firm faith in the words of the saint; approaching the latter he should not remain dubious or doubtful; he should not give preference to his own intellectual powers; if he fails to understand the instruction of the saints he should get his doubts removed by putting questions in a humble spirit; and starting the practice of the discipline, if he fails for some time to obtain happiness as a direct experience, he should never turn back from carrying out the instruction of the saint, believing in the supreme good which he will attain in the end.

The Lord said—

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया।
उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥

(Gītā IV.34)

“Attain this knowledge by all means. If you prostrate yourself at the feet of the wise, render them all forms of service, and question them with a guileless heart, again and again, those wise seers of truth will unfold that knowledge to you.”

- (2) The Sādhaka should never think that a day will come when he will give up his spiritual practice. On the contrary, he should regard it as his best wealth, supreme duty, sweetest nectar, greatest happiness and the best support of the life. Those who think that after attainment of the knowledge of God they do not require to submit

themselves to any discipline commit an error. How can they renounce the practice which brings supreme peace to their heart. The condition of the saint after realization of God makes even men of evil conduct feel drawn towards spiritual discipline; his sight compels men without discipline to start the practice of a discipline. How can the saint himself be indifferent to that discipline? When this is so, people who on the realization of very slight spiritual progress begin to consider themselves accomplished are, indeed, in great error. This error creates obstacles in the spiritual path. It brings about their fall. One should, therefore, always safeguard oneself from this error.

- (3) The Sādhaka should entertain the firm faith in his mind that nothing is difficult for one who is dutiful and has taken refuge in God. He can easily accomplish the most difficult task. Every individual is, as a matter of fact, endowed with this capacity. To feel lack of capacity means degrading oneself. To an energetic man, even a hard and difficult task becomes easy of accomplishment.
- (4) Every Sādhaka should go on examining himself. Through subtle analysis and examination, even his hidden defects may be made perfectly visible. The Sādhaka should know whether his mind has been brought under control; whether it has been made pure, one-pointed and freed from the entanglements of worldly objects. God-realization is a far cry till complete control over the mind and senses has been attained.

The Lord says—

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप्त इति मे मतिः ।
वश्यात्मना तु यतता शक्योऽवाप्तुमुपायतः ॥

(Gītā VI.36)

“Yoga is difficult of achievement for one whose mind is not subdued; by him, however, who has the mind under control, and is ceaselessly striving, it can be easily attained through practice; such is My conviction.”

Therefore, the Sādhaka should, in the first instance, bring his mind under control and make it pure and one-pointed.* The scriptures primarily lay down two means for attaining this end.

They are—

(1) Practice, and (2) Dispassion.

The Lord said—

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम्।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्णते॥

(Gītā VI.35)

“The mind is without doubt unsteady and difficult to curb, Arjuna; but it can be controlled through practice (of meditation) and dispassion, O son of Kuntī.”

Similarly, Maharsi Patañjali says—

अभ्यासवैराग्याभ्यां

तन्निरोधः।

(Yoga.I.12)

“Through Practice and Dispassion that (the mind) is brought under control.”

For a detailed explanation of the terms “Practice” and “Dispassion” the reader should refer himself to the *Yoga-Sūtras* and other books, but the Lord Himself has mainly described “Practice” as follows—

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चंचलमस्थिरम्।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत्॥

(Gītā VI. 26)

* Methods of mind-control have been discussed in a booklet entitled “Some Methods of Mind-control.”

“Restraining the restless and fidgety mind from all those objects after which it runs, he should repeatedly concentrate it on God.”

With regard to “Dispassion”, the Lord said—

ये हि संस्पर्शजा भोगा दुःखयोनय एव ते।

आद्यन्तवन्तः कौन्तेय न तेषु रमते बुधः॥

(Gītā V. 22)

The pleasures which are born of sense-contacts are verily sources of pain (though appearing as enjoyable to worldly-minded people). They have a beginning and an end (they come and go). Arjuna, it is for this reason that a wise man does not indulge in them.”

Thus, through “Practice” and “Dispassion” having made the mind pure, subordinate to self, one-pointed and full of Dispassion, one should take to meditation, with a view to keep it constantly fixed and steady in the form of God. For instance, the Lord said—

संकल्पप्रभवान् कामांस्त्यक्त्वा सर्वानशेषतः।

मनसैवेन्द्रियग्रामं विनियम्य समन्ततः॥

शनैः शनैरुपरमेदबुद्ध्या धृतिगृहीतया।

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किंचिदपि चिन्तयेत्॥

(Gītā VI. 24-25)

“Completely giving up all desires arising from thoughts of the world, and fully restraining the senses from all sides by mind, he should through gradual practice attain tranquillity; and having established the mind in God through reason controlled by steadfastness, they should not think of anything else.”

When through “Practice” and “Dispassion” the mind has been made pure, free, one-pointed and full of dispassion, it becomes certainly easy to keep it engaged in the meditation of God; but even without fully bringing the above two

methods into service, if man, surrendering himself to God, takes seriously to the practice of Japa of the Divine Name and meditation of God, he can gain everything even by this form of meditation. Soon the Sādhaka's mind becomes pure, one-pointed and subordinate to him, there is not the least doubt about this.

Maharshi Patañjali also, while describing the quickest method of attaining Samādhi, said—

‘इश्वरप्रणिधानादा’

(Yogasutras I. 23)

This is, “Practice” and “Dispassion” are the undoubted methods of controlling the mind. The greater a Sādhaka cultivates them, the sooner he will attain mind-control. But through meditation of God also, the mind may be very quickly brought to the state of Samādhi.

From this it may be concluded that practices like Japa, austerities, vows, charities, service of the masses, Satsaṅga and study of the scriptures, etc., are recommended and observed only for the practice of meditation.

Therefore, the most direct, simplest and easiest means of attaining true happiness lies in the practice of constant meditation on the Form of God. The scriptural authorities have described it under the names of Dhyāna (Meditation), Smaraṇa (Remembrance) and Nididhyāsana (constant musing). In Karmayoga (Yoga of Action), Saṅkhyayoga (Yoga of Knowledge) and other practices, meditation on God holds the primary place.

There are many different forms of meditation which Sādhakas can adopt during the state of practice, according to their qualifications. The tastes of all men are not congenial to the same form of practice. There are many paths to reach a destined goal. Even so, though as the fruit of practice the same Supreme Object is gained, there are differences in the method of practice. Establishing identity with God, the

embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, some people meditate on His Formless or Unmanifest State; while others meditate on an all-pervading God in the spirit of servant to a Master. Some meditate on the Lord's Universal Form, while others on the Form of Śrī Viṣṇu, possessed of four arms; some meditate on Śrī Kṛṣṇa the holder of the flute, enchanter of the heart, while others on the Form of Śrī Rāma, the Best Person, who laid down the standard of propriety. While some others on the Form of Śrī Śiva, the embodiment of Blessedness.

ज्ञानयज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मामुपासते।
एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतोमुखम्॥

(Gītā IX. 15)

“Others (Jñānayogīs) betake themselves to Me through their offering of knowledge, worshipping Me (in My Absolute and Formless aspect); as their very self; while still others worship Me in My Universal Form in many ways, taking Me to be diverse in diverse celestial forms.”

Therefore, a Sādhaka should constantly meditate on a Form of God which may be more appealing to his heart, and for which he may have greater faith. The final goal is the same for all; there is no need to entertain the least doubt about the goal.

Sādhakas are generally found divided into two classes—viz., (1) those who worship God in an undivided way, i.e., establishing identity with Him; and (2) those who worship Him in the spirit of Master and servant. Among them, maintenance of constant identity with only one God, the Supreme Brahma, stainless, embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, is the best form of meditation for those who worship in an undivided way. But for the second class, viz., devotees who worship

God in the spirit of master and servant, the scriptures have laid down various forms of meditation.

One does not succeed in meditation owing to ignorance about the process of meditation. The Sādhaka desires, indeed, to meditate on God; but, as a matter of fact, he meditates on the world. This defect is very commonly observed and heard. Therefore, it is extremely necessary to know the correct processes of establishing union of mind with God. Our scriptural authorities have attempted by various means, to explain these processes, some of which are being shortly described in the following lines.

Contemplation on God should, no doubt, be constantly carried on all the time, during work and rest, or during taking of food and drink, conversation or in the course of other forms of activity; but when the Sādhaka specially takes his seat for meditation, he should take care that worldly thoughts may not come up in the mind even in a secondary or subordinate sense, and start the practice of meditation seated in solitude and in a pure place. The *Gītā* says—

शुचौ देशे प्रतिष्ठाप्य स्थिरमासनमात्मनः ।
नात्युच्छ्रुतं नातिनीचं चैलाजिनकुशोत्तरम् ॥
तत्रैकाग्रं मनः कृत्वा यत्चित्तेन्द्रियक्रियः ।
उपविश्यासने युज्याद्योगमात्मविशुद्धये ॥

(VI. 11-12)

“In a clean spot having firmly placed his seat with Kuśa grass, deerskin and a cloth spread thereon one below another (Kuśa below, deerskin in the middle and cloth uppermost), neither very high nor very low, and sitting on that seat, concentrating the mind and controlling the functions

of the mind and the senses, he should practise Yoga for self-purification."

Again—

समं कायशिरोग्रीवं धारयनचलं स्थिरः ।
संप्रेक्ष्य नासिकाग्रं स्वं दिशश्चानवलोकयन् ॥

(Gītā VI. 13)

"Keeping the trunk, head and neck straight and steady remaining firm and looking at the tip of the nose, without looking in other directions."*

The Sādhaka intending to devote himself in meditation should specially know this fact that so long as consciousness of the body and the world remains, he should without fail carry on Japa of the Divine Name along with the practice of meditation. Without the help of Japa of the Divine Name, the mind cannot remain steady on the form of the Object of the Name, for any length of Time, Sleep, Indolence and various worldly latencies of the mind appear as hindrances and overwhelm the mind. The Name (of God) is the best means for keeping the Object of the Name (God) in mind. It does never allow the mind to forget the Form of its object. Thus the Name affords very strong help in the practice of meditation. Therefore, in the course of meditation, the Japa of the Name should never be stopped till the mind gets completely identified with the object of meditation. These are only some general points. Now, some definite processes of meditation will be placed before the reader.

Rules of Meditation according to the Path of Identity

The Sādhaka who intends to worship God following

* The verse advises fixing of the sight at the point of the nose, but those who are used to close their eyes during meditation may as well carry on the practice with eyes closed. There is no harm in this.

the path of identity should after taking his seat in the manner mentioned above, and renouncing all other thoughts, revolve these ideas in his mind—

(1) All that exists is full of God, the embodiment of Bliss and Consciousness itself, the Supreme Brahma. Besides Him, there is absolutely nothing, which exists; the knowledge of that Brahma also belongs to Brahma alone. He is Himself the same as knowledge; He is never non-existent. That is why He is described as Truth, constant and eternal; He is boundless, immense and infinite. The mind, intellect, the ego, subject (seer), object (of sight) and the act of seeing, and whatever else is—all are but superimpositions on Brahma, and are the same as Brahma. As a matter of fact, besides God, the Supreme Brahma, nothing exists. The whole of creation like a dream is imagined in God.

‘सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म’

(Taittiriya II. 21)

“Brahma is of the nature of Truth and Consciousness, and Infinite.”

According to this Śruti, God, the embodiment of Bliss, Truth and Knowledge, exists; “Knowledge” is not a virtue, attribute, or a form of energy (Śakti) of His apart from Him. In the same way, Sat (Existence) also is not a virtue, as distinguished from Him. He exists from eternity, and will eternally exist; that is why in common usage and in Vedic idiom, He is called Sat (Existence); but in reality He is beyond both Existence and Non-existence, Sat and Asat—

‘न सत्तना सदुच्यते’

(Gītā XIII. 12)

“Brahma is said to be neither Sat (being) nor Asat (non-being).”

Thus strongly fixing the thought on the incomprehensible Form of Brahma, let the Sādhaka, in this place of Japa, revolve, again and again, in his mind, in the following way, the attributes of God, and go on uttering the same. In reality, Brahma is beyond both name and form; but these attributes are conceived in order to bring out His Bliss aspect in the mind. Therefore, merging all his thoughts in Brahma who is Bliss itself, and meditating on such attributes of Brahma as ‘Perfect Bliss,’ ‘Unbounded Bliss,’ ‘Undisturbed Bliss,’ ‘Compact Bliss,’ Bliss, which is ‘Consciousness,’ ‘Bliss which is Knowledge,’ ‘Supreme Bliss,’ ‘Eternal Bliss,’ Bliss which is Real,’ ‘Bliss which is Life,’ ‘Bliss Absolute,’ ‘One, all-pervading Bliss’—let him make the thought stronger and stronger that nothing exists but Bliss. Simultaneously, with exceptional speed, entering and submerging the mind in Brahma, the embodiment of Bliss, let him realize these attributes as undifferentiated from God. Through this process repeated many a time, when all his thoughts get merged in God, when besides one God, the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss, his mind becomes free of the thought of existence of any other thing, he becomes unshakably established in God who is Bliss itself and incomprehensible. When the practice having become ripe, through repeated meditation practised regularly everyday the Sādhaka no longer feels his self and the world at large as separate from God, when Knower, Knowledge and the Object of Knowledge, all become the same as Brahma the embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss, the Sādhaka becomes thoroughly accomplished; In that state, the Sādhaka, practice and the object of practice, all become one, all become the same as Bliss, and that state of the Sādhaka remains absolutely the same for all time. Whether moving about or seated, or engaged in the proper and punctual performance

of every other duty, there is not the slightest deviation from his spiritual state. The Lord said—

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥

(Gītā VI. 31)

“He who, established in unity, worships Me as residing in all beings (as their very self), that Yogi, though engaged in all forms of activities, dwells in Me.”

In reality, at no time he sees either the world or his self as separate from Brahma. That is why he is never reborn after death, and becomes freed for all time to come. In the Gītā it is said—

तद्बुद्धयस्तदात्मानस्तनिष्ठास्तत्परायणः ।
गच्छन्त्यपुनरावृत्तिं ज्ञाननिर्धूतकल्पषाः ॥

(V.17)

“Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in Him, who are constantly established in identity with Him and are exclusively devoted to Him, their sins being wiped out by wisdom, go to whence there is no return.”

This is the ultimate result of the above form of meditation.

Second Form of Meditation in the Path of Identity

यच्छेद्वाइङ्मनसी प्राज्ञस्तद्यच्छेज्ञान आत्मनि ।
ज्ञानमात्मनि महति नियच्छेत्तद्यच्छेच्छान्त आत्मनि ॥

(Kathā. I. iii. 13)

“A person endowed with understanding should restrain his speech and all other senses and absorb them in the mind; he should absorb the mind in the intellect, and the intellect in Mahat-Tattva (second Principle), the cosmic intellect; thereafter he should absorb the cosmic intellect in God who is tranquillity itself.”

Retiring to a secluded spot, restrain the ten senses from running after their respective objects, in other words, controlling the functions of all the senses to engage the mind repeatedly in remembrance of the Form of God, means “absorbing speech and the other senses in the mind.” Thereafter, renouncing all doubts with regard to the Divine Form meditated upon, and reaching a settled conviction, to bring the mind to a state of calmness, that is, awakening or Knowledge to the total exclusion of all unsteadiness of the mind, means “absorbing of the mind in the intellect”. In this state of meditation, there remains consciousness of distinction between the meditator and his object of meditation, God, but after this stage when the individuality of the intellect, through which is reached a settled conviction about the Form of all-pervading God, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, the Supreme Brahma, gets absorbed in the aggregate intellect; when after cessation of all distinctions between the meditator, meditation and the object of meditation, there remains consciousness of the Form of only one God, the Supreme Brahma, who is Knowledge itself, the state is known as the absorption of the intellect in cosmic intellect.”

After the above, there arrives another indescribable state when there remains not the least residue of any separate impression of the meditator, meditation and the object of meditation, and one God alone who is Consciousness itself, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, remains, and beyond Him there remains no separate existence in any way—that state is called absorbing of the cosmic intellect in God who is tranquillity itself.

This is what they call seedless Samādhi, attainment of Brahma, the absolute, and attainment of beatitude. This is the last state of realization. Speech fails to describe this

state, the mind cannot conceive of it. For it is a state beyond the mind, speech and intellect. This is final emancipation.

Reaching this state, man accomplishes the object of existence; no other duty is, then, left which he has to attend to. It is said in the *Gītā*—

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥

(XIII. 17)

“He, however, who takes delight in the Self alone and is gratified with the Self, and is contented in the Self, has no duty.”

According to the path of identity, there are many other methods of meditation on God which cannot be described here because the article has already grown in length. The purport of all is almost the same. For Sādhakas who worship God in the spirit of identity it is extremely profitable to constantly remember the following verse of the *Gītā*—

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानामचरं चरमेव च ।
सूक्ष्मत्वात्तदविज्ञेयं दूरस्थं चान्तिके च तत् ॥

(XIII. 15)

“It is without and within all beings, and constitutes, both animate and inanimate creation. By reason of its subtlety, it is incomprehensible¹; It is both at hand and far away.”²

Therefore, the Sādhaka whose heart is inclined towards following the path of Identity—should devote himself to the practice as laid down above without delay.

1. Just as water particles in the rays of the sun, because of their minuteness, cannot be seen by the ordinary people, even so because of His minuteness the All-pervading God cannot be known by the ordinary people.

2. Inasmuch as God pervades all space and is the soul of every being, He is nearest to all.

Because of their want of Knowledge, He is far, far away from people who are faithless and ignorant.

Meditation on the Universal Form of God

If, after he has sat for meditation with closed eyes in a solitary place, the thought of the illusory world does not leave the mind of the Sādhaka, he should adopt the following line of thought.

Whatever things in the three world, viz. the earth, the intermediate region between earth and heaven and the heaven are observed, heard or conceived by the mind all of them directly constitute the bodily form of God Himself. With the help of His energy called Māyā, It is God Himself, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, who is manifested in this Universal Form. For instance, the *Gītā* says—

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम् ।
सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमाकृत्य तिष्ठति ॥

(XIII. 13)

“It has hands and feet everywhere, eyes, head and face everywhere, ears everywhere. It stands pervading all.”*

Again—

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवार्जुन ।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥

(X. 42)

“Or, what will you gain by knowing all this in detail, Arjuna? Suffice it to say that I stand holding this entire universe by a fraction of my yogic power—

यच्चापि सर्वभूतानां बीजं तदहमर्जुन ।
न तदस्ति विना यत्स्यान्मया भूतं चराचरम् ॥

(X. 39)

* Just as ether, being the cause of air, fire, water and earth, exists pervading them all, even so God, being the cause of everything, exists pervading the whole of creation, both animate and inanimate.

“Arjuna, I am even that which is the seed of all beings. For there is no creature, animate or inanimate, which exists without Me.”

Reflecting thus, again and again, and regarding the whole of creation, as in ultimate analysis, a Form of God, the mind should be fixed on the ascertained Divine Form. This practice quickly removes the unsteadiness of the mind. Thereafter, wherever the mind goes it sees only God. Nothing appears before it except God. Just as one who understands the many varieties of dolls made of ice, as in essence nothing but water, does not fall into error regarding their constituent water, and definitely sees all the dolls as water, even so the Sādhaka who carries on the above form of meditation on God, sees the entire universe as God. In his conception, there exists nothing as the world; his mind becomes calm and free from doubt. This is also an easy method of fixing the mind on God.

Meditation of the Four-armed Form of Śrī Viṣṇu

Retiring to a solitary place, and seated in the posture mentioned above, let the Sādhaka close his eyes and intoxicated with joy start the practice of meditation with a strong desire in his heart to meet the Supreme Beloved.

The meditation should be carried on either by fixing the mind on a Image of God seen in a temple or a picture of God, or a Form conceived by the mind of the Sādhaka after hearing from saints, or seeing the Lord in a dream, if he is fortunate enough to go through that experience; in other words, fixing the mind on whatever the Sādhaka may have understood, or whatever notion he

may have formed, about God's Form. Meditation on a Form of God may be ordinarily carried on as follows—

- (1) The Lord is present before us in the sky about one and a quarter cubit above the earth. His most beautiful lotus-feet shining like a heap of sapphires look as bright as an infinite number of suns. His soft toes with glittering nails are adorned with gold ornaments studded with gems. Like His lotus-feet, the Lord's knee and thigh are shining like heaps of blue gems through His yellow robe. Oh ! how graceful are His four long arms ! He holds the conch and His circular weapon (Cakra) with the two upper hands, and the club and lotus with the two lower hands. All the four arms are adorned with armlets and other most beautiful ornaments. Oh ! how broad and supremely beautiful is the chest of the Lord, with marks of Śrī Lakṣmī and Bhṛgu's foot in the middle of it ! The Lord's neck possessed of the beautiful colour of a blue lotus is most handsome to look at, and is adorned with a necklace studded with gems, the Kaustubha diamond and many varieties of beautiful garlands made of gold and sweet smelling flowers as well as with the Vaijayantī garland. His chin is graceful, the lips are red, the beautiful aquiline nose is adorned with a pearl hanging from it. Both the eyes of the Lord are as large as lotus leaves, and are similar to the blue lotus in bloom. The ears are adorned with ear-drops shaped like the crocodile, the forehead contains the Tilak mark with a red streak (mark of Śrī) in the middle, and the head is adorned with a lovely crown studded with pearls and

precious stones. Oh! the incomparable enchanting face of the Lord, putting the full moon into shame, is fascinating the mind! Like the rays of the sun, there is an aura round the Lord's face whose light has made the gems in His crown and other ornaments a thousand times more brilliant. Oh ! I am blessed today, perfectly blessed, that I have the privilege of meditating of the gently smiling, cheerful Form of Śrī Hari.

When through continuous meditation on this line, the Lord's form becomes firmly established in the mind, Sādhaka overwhelmed with Love, should fix his mind on that enchanting Form. He will attain absorption in the Form of the Lord, when through repeated practice of meditation he will lose consciousness of the self and of the world outside and even of his meditation, and retain the consciousness of God, the enchanter of the heart alone. When it happens, the Sādhaka immediately comes to know the real truth about God, and God becomes compelled through the power of the Sādhaka's Love to manifest Himself in a definite Form, and grace the Sādhaka with Divine vision.

The Lord says in the *Gītā*—

भक्त्या त्वनन्यथा शक्य अहमेवंविधोऽर्जुन।
ज्ञातुं द्रष्टुं च तत्त्वेन प्रवेष्टुं च परंतप॥

(XI. 54)

“Through single-minded devotion, however, I can be seen in this Form (with four arms), and known in essence and even entered into, O valiant Arjuna.”

Thus gaining the direct vision of God, the Sādhaka realizes the object of human existence. All his vices get destroyed and he is transformed into a full-fledged saint. Thereafter he is not reborn on earth.

The *Gitā* says—

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम्।
नान्जुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः॥

(VIII. 15)

“Great souls, who have attained highest perfection, having come to Me, are no more subjected to rebirth, which is the abode of sorrow, and transitory by nature.”

Visualizing Śrī Viṣṇu, lying on the great serpent Śeṣa, in the sky within one’s own heart, and revolving in his mind the following thoughts about the Lord’s Form and virtues, obeisances should be offered to Him, again and again.

“With bent head, I offer obeisances to Bhagavān Viṣṇu the Lord of Lakṣmī Goddess of wealth, and possessed of lotus-like eyes, whose countenance is exceptionally calm, who is lying on the back of Śrī Śeṣa making the latter His bed, who has a lotus sprung from His navel, who is the Lord of all the celestials, and is the support of the whole universe, who is all-pervading like the sky, who possesses the beautiful hue of the blue cloud, whose limbs are exceptionally handsome, who is realized by the Yogīs through meditation, who is the Lord of all worlds and who removes the fear of birth and death”*

* बंदौ विष्णु विश्वाधार!

लोकपति, सुरपति, रमापति, सुभग शान्ताकार।
कमललोचन, कलुषहर, कल्याण-पद-दातार॥
नील-नीरद वर्ण, नीरजनाभ, नभ-अनुहार।
भृगुलता-कौस्तुभ सुशोभित हृदय मुक्ताहार॥
शंख-चक्र गदा-कमलयुत भुज विभूषित चार।
पीत-पट-परिधान पावन अंग-अंग उदार॥
शेष-शश्या-शयित, योगी ध्यान-गम्य अपार।
दुःखमय भव-भय-हरण, अशरण-शरण अविकार॥

‘पत्र-पुष्ट’

He whose brilliance vies with the brilliance of innumerable suns, whose coolness is equal to that of the countless moons, who possesses the lustre of crores of Fire-gods, and the prowess of numberless wind-gods, whose affluence is equal to that of countless Indras, who possesses the beauty of crores of Cupids, whose forbearance is equal to that of innumerable Earths, whose gravity is equal to that of countless oceans, whom none can explain by any simile, whose real nature has only been assumed even by the Vedas and scriptures, and could not be fathomed by anyone, to that matchless Śrī Hari I offer obeisances, again and again.

To Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, who is gently smiling, and the drops of sweat on whose Body reflecting light appear most beautiful to that redeemer of the fallen, I offer obeisances, again and again. When, through practice repeated on this line, the mind becomes tranquil, pure and cheerful, it should be firmly established in the meditation of Śrī Nārāyaṇa lying on Śeṣa as His bed.

There are many other processes of meditation on God in both His aspects, viz., with Form and without Form. In the present article, only some short indications of them have been given. Special knowledge on the subject can be gained when a Sādhaka seriously starts his practice, surrendering himself to God and the grace of saints. With regard to meditation on God's aspect with Form, only two processes of meditation on Śrī Viṣṇu have been described in this article. Following these processes Sādhakas can meditate on the Forms of Śrī Rāma, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Śiva and other Forms of God, according to their respective faith and liking. The fruit of all such practice is the same.

On rising from meditation in solitude, when the Sādhaka enters the field of activity, he should, during all his works and while moving about and resting, try to carry on in the same manner, the Japa of the Name of his chosen deity and meditation on His Form. Not a moment of this invaluable life should be allowed to pass without remembrance of God. One remembers during his last moment whatever is constantly practised by him throughout the life; and his future is determined by the thoughts of the last moment. That is why the Lord says in the *Gitā*—

तस्मात् सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च।
मव्यपितमनोबुद्धिर्ममिवैष्वस्यसंशयम् ॥

(VIII. 7)

“Therefore, Arjuna, think of Me at all times and fight. With mind and reason thus surrendered to Me you will doubtless come to Me.”

Thus, through continued meditation on God, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss; the Supreme Brahma, the heart of the Sādhaka grows purer and spotless. All his worries are gone and the heart overflows with unique peace that passes understanding. The mind gets one-pointed, and comes under control. True happiness goes on gradually growing within him, as through intensification of practice, the purity and concentration of his mind increase. When the Sādhaka gains even the slightest experience of this true happiness, he begins to look upon the joy of even sovereignty over the three worlds as quite worthless and insignificant compared to it. In this state, the joy derived from ordinary enjoyments of the world offers not the slightest temptation. On the contrary, all enjoyments begin to appear as perishable, momentary and full of woe. Through this practice, all the impulses of the

Sādhaka's mind get speedily withdrawn from the world and become fixed and established in God. Realizing for all time the true and infinite happiness, the Sādhaka gets satisfied and contented. All his sorrows totally cease. The attainment of this state is the ultimate goal of human existence.

Dear reader, we should cultivate the firm conviction that the supreme duty of a man's life is only to realize God, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, the Supreme Brahma, the Almighty Lord, the Bestower of Happiness. In the world and the next, the greatest, the eternal, the truest happiness lies in this. Apart from it, whatever other forms of happiness appear in the world, are in reality no happiness at all. They are all, truly speaking, misery and nothing but misery, The *Yoga Darśana* says—

परिणामतापसंस्कारदुःखैर्गुणवृत्तिविरोधाच्च दुःखमेव सर्वं विवेकिनः ।

(II. 15)

“All forms of sense-enjoyment of the world, being subject to change, and mixed up with pain, the latent impressions of the mind, and worldly sorrow, and involving a mutual conflict of the Sāttvic, Rājasic and Tāmasic propensities of the mind are nothing but sorrow to men of discrimination.”

Therefore, renouncing wholly the transient, perishable and artificial enjoyments of the world, we should speedily devote ourselves, with energy and determination to the practice leading to realization of God, the embodiment of true happiness.

Lessons in Devotion and Divine Love

The mind of who has taken refuge in God prays to the Lord—

O Lord ! O Sustainer of the Universe ! O Kind-hearted Protector of the distressed ! O Ocean of Mercy ! O Knower of the heart ! O Saviour of the fallen ! O Almighty Lord ! O Friend of the poor ! O Nārāyaṇa ! O Hari ! Have pity on me, have pity on me ! O Lord ! O Reader of man's thoughts ! You are famous throughout the world as 'Ocean of Mercy' and 'Almighty,' therefore it is Your Nature to show compassion.

O Lord, If Your Name is 'Purifier of the fallen,' please come, and grant me Your vision. Bowing, again and again, to Your feet, I beseech You humbly, O Lord, bless me with Your sight. O Lord, except You I have none in the world whom I can call as my own. Please grant me once the privilege of Your sight, do not tantalise me any more. You are called 'Sustainer of the Universe,' then why do You not satisfy my heartfelt desire? O Embodiment of mercy ! O Ocean of grace ! Show me Your compassion. Being an Ocean of compassion, a little shower of compassion will bring no diminution of the quality in You. Through only a slight expression of Your grace; the whole of this universe may be saved. Then, what does it cost You to save this insignificant soul? O Lord, if You look to my doings, there is absolutely no hope for me. Therefore, paying attention to Your Name as 'Saviour of the fallen,' grant to this insignificant soul the privilege of Your sight. I know neither devotion, nor Yoga, nor any other practices, that I may claim the privilege by virtue of my performances. Being the knower of man's

thoughts, if You had not been an Ocean of mercy, none would have called You by the latter name in this world; and being an Ocean of mercy if You could not read the anguish of the heart, none would have called You as the 'Knower of the heart.' Though possessed of the above two virtues, if You had lacked in power, none would have called You Almighty, and possessed of all powers. If You had been only a Lover of devotees, none would have called You as 'Saviour of the fallen.' O Lord! O Ocean of mercy! Have pity on me, and grant me once Your sight. (1)

The individual soul, addressing the mind, says:—

O wicked mind, can your hypocritical prayers please the Lord who knows man's heart? Does He not know that your prayers are not disinterested, that you possess neither reverence, nor faith, nor love, in the slightest degree? If you have faith that God is the knower of man's heart, Why do you offer these verbal prayers? False prayers, without love, obtain no hearing from God; and if you possess love, where is the need for words of prayer? For the Lord Himself had said in the *Gitā*—

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्।

(IV. 11)

"Arjuna, howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them."

Again—

ये भजन्ति तु मां भक्त्या मयि ते तेषु चाप्यहम्॥

(*Gitā* IX. 29)

"They, however, who devoutly worship Me abide in Me, and I also stand revealed in them."*

* Just as subtle, all-pervading Fire becomes manifest, only when a fire is made through the lighting up of combustible matter; even so God, who pervades everywhere, is revealed in the heart of one who practises Bhajana with a devoted heart.

O mind, though being the Ocean of compassion, if Śrī Hari (God) does not show compassion, there is nothing to worry; you should go on performing your duty. God is a Lover, He recognizes love; the subject matter of Love is known only to the Lover. Can God, the knower of heart, grant you His vision, drawn by your pretended Love ? When the strings of Pure Love, Reverence and Faith are ready, bound by them, God will Himself come to you. O stupid mind, can false prayers produce any effect ? Is not God the reader of hearts ? O mind, good-bye to you; your habit is to wander about the world, please go wherever you like. Being associated with you, I have roamed these years in this unsubstantial world. Now, having taken refuge at the feet of God, your entire fraud stands revealed to me. For my sake, you deceitfully offer prayers to God in humble and beseeching words, but you do not know that God is a reader of the heart. The *Yogavāsiṣṭha* truly says that God cannot be realized till the mind is transcended, in other words, till it is destroyed. Exhaustion of desires, destruction of the mind and God-realization—these three processes take place simultaneously. Therefore, I entreat you to retire from here gracefully; this bird will no longer be caught in the net of your phantasms, for it has taken refuge at the feet of Śrī Hari (God). What Do you mean to leave after swallowing the bitter pill? Oh! Where is that phantasy? Where are the enemies—anger, lust and others? Your entire army is now going to be destroyed. Therefore, giving up the hope of exerting your influence, go wherever you please. (2)

The mind, again, prays to God—

O Lord, have pity on me; O Master, I surrender myself to You, O Protector of the refugee, save the

honour of one who has taken refuge in You. O Lord, help me, help me; come, and grace me with Your sight, I have no support in this world except You; therefore, I bow You, again and again; I make obeisance to You. Please make no delay, quickly come and give me the privilege of Your sight. O Lord, O Ocean of mercy, come once and take care of this bond-slave. In Your absence, I find no support to my life, O Lord, have pity on this slave; I have surrendered myself to You, please cast but once Your kind look on me. O Lord, O Friend and Protector of the helpless, do not balk me any more, have pity on me. Without looking at my wickedness, reveal Yourself as the saviour of the fallen. (3)

The individual soul, addressing the mind again, says—

O mind, take heed ! Be careful ! why do you indulge in these idle talks. God does not want your false humility. Your deceit will not be successful here; why do you offer to God these hypocritical prayers for my sake? I do not want you to make such prayers; you may go wherever you like.

If God is the knower of the heart, where is the need to offer any prayer? If He is a Lover, what is the need to call Him? If He is the sustainer of the Universe, what is the need to beg of Him? Good-bye to you, go hence; go.(4)

The individual soul, addressing the intellect and senses says—

O sense ! Good-bye to you, you also, please, leave me. Where there are desires, there you have the ground to stand upon. I have taken refuge at the lotus-feet of God; therefore, your stratagem will make no impression on me. O intellect ! Good-bye also to you. Where did you leave your wisdom, when you used to prompt me to

dive into the ocean of the world ? Is that teaching of any use now? (5)

The individual soul says to God—

O Lord, You are the knower of the heart, therefore I do not say that You should grant me Your vision. If I have possessed full love, could You tarry ! Could even Lakṣmī detain You at Vaikuṇṭha ? If I had possessed full faith in You, could You wait ? Could my love and faith leave You? Oh! Falsely have I assumed in the world the roles of disinterestedness and desirelessness and in vain do I regard myself as a refugee at Your feet, but I need not worry; whatever I obtain, I should feel delighted in the same. For, that is Your instruction in the *Gītā**. Therefore, while merged in Your love, if I attain even hell, it will be superior to heaven. Why should I, then, worry? If I gain love for You, will You not develop the same for me ? When absence of Your sight will become unbearable to me, will You, then, be able to tarry? You have Yourself said in the *Gītā* —

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम्।

(IV. 11)

“Arjuna, howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them.”

Therefore, I do not say that You should come and grant me Your vision; and why should You care to do so? But, no worry, please do whatever You consider best; I should feel delight in whatever You do. (6)

Meditating on God through its eye of wisdom, and intoxicated with joy, the individual soul says—

Oh! Oh ! Bliss! Lord! Lord; Have You come ? Thanks to my fortune; Thanks; Fallen though I am, I

* यदच्छालाभसंतुष्टः । (*Gītā* IV. 22)

संतुष्टो येन केनचित् । (*Gītā* XII. 19)

have become blessed through the grace of Your lotus-feet. Why should it not be so ? You have Yourself said in the *Gītā*—

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक् ।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः ॥
क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति ।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति ॥

(IX. 30-31)

“Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive devotion, he should be considered a saint; for he has rightly resolved. (He is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship.)

“Speedily he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace. Know it for certain, Arjuna, that my devotee never falls.”

(7) Gaining the vision in meditation of the wonderful Saguna Form of the Lord (Form with attributes), the individual soul mentally describes the beauty of that Form—

Oh! How beautiful are the lotus-feet of the Lord, which, sparkling like a heap of blue gem, shine like an infinite number of suns. The soft toes containing glittering nails are adorned with gold anklets studded with gems. Like His lotus-feet; the Lord’s knees and thighs are emitting their lustre through His yellow robe like heaps of blue gems. Oh! How beautiful are the Lord’s four arms. In the upper two hands, there are the conch and His circular weapon Cakra, and in the two lower, the club and the lotus. All the four arms are adorned with armlets and other beautiful ornaments. Oh! How beautiful is the bosom of the Lord, the middle of which contains the marks of Śrī Lakṣmī (Goddess of Wealth) and Bhṛgu’s foot. How charming, again, is the neck of the Lord coloured like a blue lotus, containing a necklace studded with gems, the Kaustubha diamond, and

adorned with necklace of pearl and gold, the Vaijayantī garland and other garlands of many varieties of flowers. His lips are beautiful and red. His nose containing a pearl hanging below is exceptionally charming. The Lord's two eyes are as large as leaves of the lotus, and bloom like the blue-lotus. His ears are adorned with beautiful crocodile-shaped ear-drops studded with gems, the forehead contains the Tilak mark with a red streak in the middle, and the head is adorned with a crown studded with gems. Oh! How charming is the round face of the Lord looking like the full moon containing an aura emitting rays like that of the sun, which sparkle through the gems in His crown and all other ornaments. Oh! I am blessed today, indeed, truly blessed that I see before me God, the embodiment of bliss, mildly smiling through His lips. (8)

Thus intoxicated with joy, seeing the Lord before him in meditation, at the distance of a cubit and a quarter length, in a Form looking only twelve years of age, standing at a height of one and quarter cubit from earth, the soul offers mental worship to God.

Process of Mental Worship

ॐ पादयोः पाद्यं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ १ ॥

(Om, I offer water for washing the feet; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Uttering this Mantra, and washing the Lord's lotus-feet with pure water, the water should be sprinkled by the Sādhaka over his own head. (1)

ॐ हस्तयोरर्घ्यं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ २ ॥

(Om, I offer water to the Lord's hands; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Uttering the above, the Lord's hands should be washed with pure water. (2)

ॐ आचमनीयं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ ३ ॥

(Om, I offer water for sipping; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

With the Mantra, water should be offered to Śrī Nārāyaṇa for rinsing the mouth. (3)

ॐ गन्धं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ ४ ॥

(Om, I offer scented substance, obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Uttering this Mantra, Rolī should be applied to the Lord's forehead. (4)

ॐ मुक्ताफलं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ ५ ॥

(Om, I offer pearl; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

With this Mantra, a pearl should be fixed to the Lord's forehead on Rolī. (5)

ॐ पुष्टं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ ६ ॥

(Om, I offer flowers, obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Uttering this Mantra, flowers should be showered on the Lord's head and in the sky before the Lord's nose.

ॐ मालां समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ ७ ॥

(Om, I offer a garland of flowers; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

With this Mantra, a garland of flowers should be put round the neck of the Lord. (7)

ॐ धूपमाद्रापयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ ८ ॥

(Om, I offer incense; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Incense should be burnt before the Lord after utterance of this Mantra. (8)

ॐ दीपं दर्शयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ ९ ॥

(Om, I offer light; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

A light of clarified butter should be placed before the Lord after utterance of the above Mantra. (9)

ॐ नैवेद्यं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ १० ॥

(Om, I offer eatables; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Crystals of sugar should be offered to the Lord after utterance of this Mantra. (10)

ॐ आचमनीयं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ ११ ॥

(Om, I offer water for rinsing the mouth; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

With this Mantra, water should be offered for rinsing the Lord's mouth. (11)

ॐ क्रतुफलं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ १२ ॥

(Om, I offer fruits; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

With the utterance of this Mantra, various seasonal fruits (bananas etc.,) should be offered to the Lord. (12)

ॐ पुनराचमनीयं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ १३ ॥

(Om, I offer, again, water for rinsing the mouth; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Water for rinsing the mouth should be, again, offered to the Lord after utterance of this Mantra. (13)

ॐ पूर्णीफलं सताम्बूलं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ १४ ॥

(Om, I offer betel-nut with betel; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

With this Mantra, betel-leaf with betel-nut should be offered to the Lord. (14)

ॐ पुनराचमनीयं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ १५ ॥

(Om, I offer, again, water for rinsing the mouth; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Water for rinsing the mouth should be offered after utterance of this Mantra.

Thereafter, light made of camphor in a plate of gold should be waved before the Lord. (15)

ॐ पुष्पांजलिं समर्पयामि नारायणाय नमः ॥ १६ ॥

(Om, I offer handful of flowers; obeisance to Nārāyaṇa.)

Filling the cavities of both the palms with varieties of beautiful flowers, the same should be showered on the Lord's head, after utterance of the above Mantra. (16)

Thereafter, going round the Lord four times, keeping Him to the right, obeisance should be offered to Śrī Nārāyaṇa, touching the earth with eight limbs of the body. (9)

Thus, offering mental worship to God, and laying Him down in a bed in the sky within the heart, the individual soul bows its head before the Lord, again and again, mentally describing the Lord's Form and virtues—

शान्ताकारं भुजगशयनं पद्मनाभं सुरेशं
विश्वाधारं गगनसदृशं मेघवर्णं शुभांगम्।
लक्ष्मीकान्तं कमलनयनं योगिभिर्ध्यनगम्यं
वन्दे विष्णुं भवभयहरं सर्वलोकैकनाथम्॥

“Obeisance to Śrī Viṣṇu, of lotus-like eyes, the Lord of Lakṣmī (Goddess of Wealth), Who is extremely mild in Form. Who lies on Śrī Śeṣa making the latter His bed, from Whose navel has sprung the lotus. Who is the Lord of all celestials and is the support of the entire universe. Who is all-pervading like the sky. Whose colour resembles the blue cloud, all of Whose limbs are most beautiful. Who is attained by the Yogīs through meditation. Who is the Lord of all regions, and is the destroyer of fear of births and deaths.”

He Whose brilliance is similar to that of innumerable suns, Whose coolness resembles the coolness of an infinite number of moons, Whose glow equals that of crores of Fire-gods, Whose prowess equals that of numberless Wind-gods, Whose affluence equals that of an infinite number of Indras (celestial king), Whose beauty equals

that of crores of Cupids (love-gods). Whose forbearance equals that of numberless earths. Whose gravity equals that of crores of oceans. Whom none can explain by any simile, the Vedas and the scriptures have conceived about Whose Form only by imagination, and none could get over Whose mystery—obeisance, again and again, to that incomparable Śrī Hari (God).

Obeisance, again and again, to Śrī Hari (God), the saviour of the fallen, to Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu (God), the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, Who is mildly smiling, and all the limbs of whose Body look most beautiful because of the shining particles of sweat in them. (10)

Mentally fanning the Lord and serving His feet, the individual soul offers Him praises—

O Lord! You are Brahmā, You are Viṣṇu, You are Śiva, You are the sun, You are the moon, You are the stars; the earth, the intermediate region and heaven all these three regions are You; the seven divisions of the terrestrial world, the fourteen worlds etc., all these are Your Form; You are the Universe; You are Hiranyagarbha (Brahmā), You are the Four-armed Lord, and You alone are pure Brahma beyond Māyā, and it is You who have assumed the various forms, therefore the whole created world is Your Form; the seer, the object of sight and act of seeing, and whatever there is, all that is You*

Therefore—

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------|--------------|
| नमः | समस्तभूतानामादिभूताय | भूभृते। |
| अनेकरूपरूपाय | विष्णवे | प्रभविष्णवे॥ |

* 'एको विष्णुर्महदभूतं पृथग्भूतान्यनेकशः'

(Viṣṇusahasranāma 140)

"The Creator of the different beings, Viṣṇu, the great Being alone, is manifested in various forms." Again, 'एकोऽहं बहु स्याम्' (in the beginning of creation God thought) "I am one, may I be many."

“Obeisance to Śrī Viṣṇu, of all beings the Prime Being, the bearer of the earth, who assumes infinite Forms, manifested throughout the ages.”

त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव।
त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव त्वमेव सर्वं मम देवदेव॥

“You are the Mother, You are the Father, You are the Kinsman, You are the Friend, You are Learning, You are Wealth; O Lord of the gods! You are my all.”

(11)

When the Sādhaka engaged in the practice of devotion develops supreme love for God, he forgets even the consciousness of the body, just as saint Sundardās, in the course of his description of Divine Love, says—

“When Love is fixed on God.

One forgets the house and all its connections,

Like a lunatic, he goes about hither and thither,
Not the least consciousness of the body remains.

He sighs through every pore of his being,
Tears begin to flow like an unending stream;
Says Sundara, who will observe the rules

of nine forms of devotion?”*

“When one gets intoxicated through a hearty

drink of the sweet Juice (of Love).

When the devotee has no cause of shame
in the three worlds, nor does he follow

the commandments of the Vedas.

* प्रेम लग्यो परमेश्वरसों, तब भूल गयो सिगरो घरबारा।
ज्यों उन्मत्त फिरे जित ही तित, नैक रही न शरीर सँभारा॥
श्वास उसास ठडे सब रोम, चलै दृग नीर अखण्डत धारा।
सुन्दर कौन करै नवधा विधि, छाकि पर्यो रस थी मतवारा॥

He fears not ghosts and goblins, nor do
gods and Yakṣas put him to fright.

His ears do not hear another's talk, and
other desires do not appear,

His lips do not utter other words—

This is Bhakti marked by Divine Love.”¹

“Under the influence of Love, he walks, as if, intoxicated,
And indulges in incoherent talk;

Just as the Gopī lost the body-consciousness
Even so one should long for the Beloved.”².

“Just as fish is restless without water, and
the child without milk;

Just as one who is ailing finds it difficult
to remain without medicine.

Just as the Cātaka bird craves for the
drop of the Swāti Star, and the moon is

dear to the Cakora;

Just as the snake is disquiet out of its
craving for sandal-wood,

Just as the poor craves for money, and man
craves for woman;

He who thirsts for God like these, does
not like anything else.

1. न लाज तीन लोककी, न वेदको कह्यो करै।
न शंक भूत प्रेतकी, न देव यक्ष तें डरै॥
सुनै न कान औरकी, द्रसै न और इच्छना।
कहै न मुख और बात, भक्ति प्रेम लच्छना॥

2. प्रेम अधीनो छाक्यो डोलै, क्यों की क्यों ही बाणी बोलै।
जैसे गोपी भूली देहा, तैमे चाहे जासों नेहा॥

When Divine Love flows through a heart,
all rules are thrown away.

Says Sundara, this is Divine Love”¹

“Now he laughs and begins to dance, now he weeps,
Now his voice is choked with emotion,
words do not come out of his lips.

Now the heart being transported with joy,
he sings at the top of his voice;

Now he remains still and silent like the sky.
The heart and all earthly possession being

given to Hari, how can he remain heedful?

Says Sundara, O disciple, hear, this is Divine Love,”² (12)

When the Saguna Form of the Lord (the Form with attributes) disappears, being merged in the Form of God as pure Saccidānanda (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss) the All-pervading Supreme Brahma, the Jīvātmā says—

1. नीर बिनु मीन दुखी, क्षीर बिनु शिशु जैसे,
पीरकी ओषधि बिनु, कैसे रहो जात है।
चातक ज्यों स्वातिबूंद, चंदको चकोर जैसे,
चन्दनकी चाह करि सर्प अकुलात है॥
निधन ज्यों धन चाहे, कामिनीको कन्त चाहे,
ऐसी जाके चाह, ताहि कछु न सुहात है।
प्रेमको प्रवाह ऐसो, प्रेम तहां नेम कैसो,
सुन्दर कहत यह, प्रेमहीकी बात है॥
2. कबहुँक हँसि उठि नृत्य करै, रोबन फिर लागे।
कबहुँक गदगद-कण्ठ, शब्द निकसे नहिं आगे॥
कबहुँक हृदय उमंग, बहुत ऊँचे स्वर गावे।
कबहुँक है मुख मौन, गगन ऐसे रहि जावे॥
चित्त-वित्त हरिसों लग्यो, सावधान कैसे रहै।
यह प्रेम लक्षणा भवित है, शिष्य सुनहु सुन्दर कहै॥

Bliss ! Bliss !! Supreme Bliss !!! One Vāsudeva alone pervades everywhere.* Bliss alone pervades everywhere.

Where is lust ? Where is anger ? Where is greed ? Where are delusion, pride, covetousness, haughtiness, excitement and the enchantment of Māyā ? Where are the mind, intellect and the senses? Everywhere Saccidānanda and Saccidānanda alone (Existence, Knowledge and Bliss) pervades. Oh! Everywhere there is one, all-pervading Bliss, which is the same as Truth, Consciousness and Bliss, solid, whole, conscious, absolute, imperishable, unmanifest, incomprehensible, eternal, the highest reality, the supremely indestructible, complete on all sides, undefinable, everlasting, all-pervading, immovable, constant, imperceptible by the senses, beyond Māyā, unperceivable, Supreme Bliss, Highest Bliss, Bliss-and-Bliss; there is nothing apart from Bliss !!

(13)

* बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।
वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

(Gītā VII. 19)

"In the very last of all births, the man of realization worships Me, realizing that all this is God. Such a great soul is very rare."

The Path of Devotion in the *Gītā*

The *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* is an incomparable book of spiritual lore, a store-house of the principles of Action, Devotion and Knowledge. It cannot be said that the *Gītā* deals primarily with this or that particular path or discipline. Although it is a small book in which the various topics have been touched upon only briefly, the treatment of none of these is incomplete. It has, therefore, been truly said—

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किमन्यैः शस्त्रविस्तरैः ।
या स्वयं पद्मनाभस्य मुखपद्माद्विनिःसृता ॥

“It is needless to traverse the vast field of spiritual literature, the *Gītā* alone should be read and reread with care, the *Gītā* which proceeded from the lotus-like lips of Padmanābha (Mahāviṣṇu, from whose navel sprang the lotus, the place of origin of the Creator, Brahmā) Himself.”

The intention of the above verse is not to discourage the study of the other scriptures, but only to bring out the real worth of the *Gītā*. One who has realized the truths contained in the *Gītā* has nothing more to know. The different disciplines of Action, Worship and Knowledge have been dealt with in their respective places thoroughly and clearly. It cannot, therefore, be said that one is the main, and others are subsidiary themes of the *Gītā*. Whatever point of view is dear to one, whatever doctrine he may believe in, finds its support in the *Gītā*. That is the reason why different commentators have offered different interpretations of the *Gītā*. None of them can, however, be pronounced to be incorrect. Just as the Vedas represent the breath of the Paramātmā even so the *Gītā* representing as it does the words uttered by God is nothing but God Himself manifested in that Form. That is why like God Himself the teaching of

the *Gītā*, too, appear in different lights to different devotees according to their respective mental constitution. Making the spiritual need of His dear friend and devotee Arjuna on an occasion, the Lord delivered His incomparable message of the *Gītā* for the good of entire humanity. To discourse or write on any point mentioned in that book is nothing but a puerile attempt on the part of a person like me. I am fully conscious of my incompetence to deal with present subject. It is therefore, my humble prayer that learned and devoted souls who may happen to read these lines will kindly excuse me for this childish attempt.

Although each of the paths of Action, Devotion and Knowledge has its own importance in the *Gītā* it may nevertheless be stated that devotion is the main theme of the *Gītā*, that there is hardly any chapter which contains no reference to Bhakti. The *Gītā* begins with Devotion and ends with Devotion too. At the very commencement of the discourse, Arjuna surrenders himself to the Lord saying 'शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम्' (pray instruct me; I take refuge in Thee). Similarly, at the conclusion of the discourse the Lord lends His fullest support to, nay, enjoins, the attitude of complete surrender to and dependence on God, i.e., Himself when He says 'सर्वधर्मान्यस्त्वयं मामेकं शरणं ब्रज'. (Relinquishing dependence on all other virtues take refuge in Me alone), and further takes upon Himself the responsibility of absolving Arjuna from all sins. It is agreed on all hands that attitude of surrender represents a form of Devotion. Of course, the devotion taught by the *Gītā* is not a blind faith devoid of discrimination or an ignorant relinquishment of duty through sloth or inertia; it is an active form of devotion based on discrimination. This devotion can be properly practised by aspirants who have approached the perfection of God, the fullest embodiment of perfection. The Lord Himself has

described the character of this Devotion in the twelfth chapter of the *Gītā*. In devotion as taught by the *Gītā* there is no room for sin. How can it be possible for a devotee who has made God his sole refuge in life, who sees and feels the presence of God on all sides and in every object, to commit any act of sin even in secret ? How can devotee who having surrendered himself entirely at the feet of the Lord desires to make himself completely subservient to His will be capable of any sinful act ? How can a devotee who, realizing the creation to be a manifestation of the Lord, considers it his duty to render service to all, be indolent or lethargic ? How can he who possesses the light of true knowledge of the Paramātmā find himself in the region of Darkness or Ignorance ?

It was therefore, that the Lord gave the following express command to Arjuna—

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च।
मद्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्ममेवैष्वस्यसंशयम् ॥

(Gītā VIII. 7)

“Therefore, Arjuna think of Me at all times and fight with mind and reason thus surrendered to Me, you will doubtless come to Me.”

This represents what they call Devotion accompanied by disinterested action which is a sure way to realize God. Similar injunctions were uttered by the Lord in IX. 27, XVIII. 57, and some other verses of the *Gītā*.

This does not mean that the Lord did not say anything separately and exclusively either about Karmayoga (Action) or about Bhaktiyoga (Devotion). Verses like ‘कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते’ (the right is only to action), ‘योगस्थः कुरु कर्माणि’ (perform action while established in Yoga) refer only to Karma (action); and verses like ‘मन्मना भव’ (fix thy mind in Me) refer only to Bhakti (devotion). But in these statements also the dependence

of Karma on Bhakti, and of Bhakti on Karma may be detected though not expressly stated. One who engages in action while established in Yoga through internal equilibrium and knowing the result of action to lie in God's hands indirectly practises devotion through remembrance of God, and a devotee engaged in devotional practices like worship, obeisance etc., may be similarly said to be doing some action through those practices. The difference between him and an ordinary person who performs action through attachment lies in this that while the latter engages in action for the fulfilment of his own worldly desires the former does so only for the pleasure of God. The *Gītā* has denounced renunciation of action for its own sake, and has characterized such renunciation as Tāmasic in character (*Gītā* XVIII. 7). And stating in verse 4 of chapter III., that perfection cannot be attained by renunciation of action, it has been pointed out in the next Śloka that complete and absolute renunciation of action is impossible. Therefore, according to the *Gītā* Devotion lies in pursuing through body and mind all kinds of action appropriate to the caste in which a person is born, for the sake of God, taking the performance of such action as being enjoined by God, fixing the mind completely and whole-heartedly in God Salvation in the form of supreme perfection is attainable by this devotion. The Lord says:—

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्वमिदं तत्पू।
स्वकर्मणा तपश्चर्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

(Gītā XVIII. 46)

“He from whom is the emanation of all beings, by whom all this is pervaded—by worshipping Him through the performance of his own duty, man attains perfection.” This form of action instead of being the source and cause of bondage brings salvation, there is no danger of a fall

through its pursuit. God has enjoined all spiritual aspirants to take up and pursue the path of action for God-realization and citing His own example has advised even the liberated soul to engage in action for the good of the people, for guiding them along the right path, although, personally speaking, he has no more duties to perform—'तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते'।

Moreover, Arjuna was a Kṣatriya, a family man and a man of action; that is the reason why he was specially advised to follow a path in which there is combination of Devotion and Action. Truly speaking this is what is necessary for the good of the people. There is predominance of Tamoguṇa (ignorance and darkness) in the present-day world. It is on account of this Tamoguṇa that people who retire into seclusion are debarred from attaining divine knowledge and though outwardly engaged in prayer and meditation, they fall a prey to sleep, sloth and inaction. It is found in many cases that people who give up work saying they would henceforward live in seclusion, spend their time in devotional practices and meditation alone, soon get disgusted with their life of seclusion. Some of them begin to spend their time in sleep, while others are found to complain that they do not find any zest in meditation. Thus some of them turn out to be idlers, while others begin to indulge themselves through enjoyment of the senses. Persons who truly and sincerely devote themselves to prayer and meditation are very rare. To engage oneself wholly in devotional practices and meditation, while living in seclusion, is not undesirable, but it is not so easy as we imagine it to be. Long and sustained practice is necessary to reach this stage and the practice may be developed and made more intense by a gradual process even while performing the ordinary duties of one's life. It is, therefore, that the Lord

has enjoined us to perform action in a spirit of detachment constantly meditating on Him, taking such action as a behest from Him and solely for cultivating His pleasure. Engagement in or withdrawal from action is neither a hindrance nor a help in reaching a state of deep meditation of the Lord. Genuine faith, reverence or Love is the main factor helpful to meditation. Where there is faith, where there is love, action cannot be a hindrance; on the contrary, every single action of such a person being performed for God's pleasure is converted into devotion in its purest form. This, too, does not prove the necessity of renunciation of action. Nor is it my intention to discourage the constant practice of devotion in seclusion.

For those who are qualified, "living in seclusion" (विविक्तदेशसेवित्वम्) and "absence of enjoyment in the company of men (अरतिर्जनसंसदि) are no doubt the proper course, but in the world as it is constituted the majority is found to consist of those who are qualified to follow only the discipline of Action. He alone is really qualified to live in seclusion who is completely absorbed in the devotion of God, whose heart overflows with undivided love for God, who begins to feel uneasy when he forgets the Lord even for a moment, who cannot properly perform his worldly duties having lost all consciousness of the outside world through ecstasy of divine love and to whom the very sight or mention of enjoyments of the world is tormenting. For persons possessing these qualifications it is certainly more beneficial to remain aloof from society and keep themselves constantly engaged in spiritual practices in sequestered places. They do not give up work, it is work that takes leave of them. Such men when they retire to secluded places never yield to laziness nor do they indulge in worldly thoughts or desires. On the contrary,

seclusion steadily swells the stream of their devotion which unites them in no time with the great ocean of Divinity and enables them to merge their individual existence into the infinite, illimitable expanse of that ocean. But those who are troubled by worldly impulses and distractions while living in seclusion are not qualified to suspend their activity for any length of time and lead a life of devotion in seclusion. The vast majority of people in this world belong to this last category. The practice followed by wise men is to suggest those methods alone which are suitable for the majority. Special efforts should, therefore, be made to turn the course of one's activities approved of by the Śāstras, towards God, and not to renounce them.

It has been stated above that Arjuna was a family man, a Kṣatriya (one belonging to the warrior class) and a man of action, therefore, he was enjoined to stick to the path of Action. This, however, does not mean that the *Gītā* is intended for family men, Kṣatriyas and men of action only. There is no doubt that this nectar-like milk in the form of the *Gītā* has been available to the world only through the medium of Arjuna who acted as a calf to cause the milk to flow. It is so sweet, so universally useful that people of all countries, all communities, all classes, and all Āśramas (orders) can drink it without let or hindrance, and attain immortality. Just as God is within the reach of all, even so the teachings of the *Gītā* are open to all. Of course, it is necessary that he who seeks to derive benefit from the *Gītā*, should have an unimpeachable conduct and should be endowed with faith, devotion and love. For the Lord has warned us not to propagate its message among irreverent and unwilling persons and among those who have fallen from the path of virtue or who lack the spirit of devotion (*Gītā* XVIII. 67). Any one who has taken refuge in God,

to whatever race or class he may belong, is qualified to drink this nectar (*Gītā* IX. 32).

There are, it may be urged, only two paths of spiritual discipline in the *Gītā*, the path of Knowledge and the path of Action, there being no mention of a third discipline like Devotion how can it, therefore, be said that Devotion forms the main theme of the *Gītā*? The answer to this is that though Devotion has not been mentioned as a distinct path or discipline, we should first try to understand what is actually meant by a discipline, and whether the path of Action or even that of Knowledge can be followed without cultivation of the spirit of worship or devotion. Action without the spirit of worship degenerates into a lifeless action, hence it cannot lead to emancipation, nor is Knowledge without Devotion commendable. According to the *Gītā* Devotion should form an integral part of the both the disciplines of Action and Knowledge. The word *Niṣṭhā* indicating a discipline, etymologically means ‘being established in the *Paramātmā*.’ One gets established in God in two ways—as distinct from God and as identical with Him. In the former state he recognizes God as the whole (अंशी) and himself as a part (अंश), God as the object of worship, and himself the worshipper. Work which is done with the above recognition and with the motive of pleasing God, in accordance with the injunctions of God, without attachment to the result of such work constitutes what is known as Karmayoga or disinterested action. And the latter state or the state of identity with Brahma, which is consolidated truth, knowledge and bliss, is that in which all action taking place in *Prakṛti* (Nature), is recognized only as play of *Prakṛti*, as nothing but illusion, and all existence is resolved into a unity—the unity of Brahma beyond which there is nothing. The state of unity or identity is called *Sāṅkhyayoga* (Yoga of

knowledge). Devotion permeates both these forms of spiritual discipline. Thus it is seen that there was no necessity to mention Devotion as a separate discipline. It may be urged here that if such is the case, realization of God will not be possible through Devotion alone without recourse to Karmayoga or Jñānayoga. This, however, is not correct. For the Lord has stated at several places in the *Gītā* that realization of God is possible through Devotion alone. As regards direct vision of God, He has gone so far as to say that there is no other means to it besides exclusive devotion to God (*Gītā* XI. 54). The point has been further elucidated in verse 24 of chapter XIII, wherein Devotion in the form of Meditation has been expressly stated as a means of Self-realization—‘ध्यानेनात्मनि पश्यन्ति’. The practice of the form of Devotion, viz., meditation can be carried on along with the two forms of discipline stated above or as a separate discipline. The discipline of Devotion or worship is the easiest and best of all disciplines. The aspirant on this path is backed by God Who is a source of ever-increasing strength to him. Let, therefore, all of us adopt the discipline of pure and exclusive devotion to God without any ulterior or worldly motive and perform our ordinary duties of life with the only motive of pleasing God.

Devotion consists in Exclusive Love for God

There is no easier path to the attainment of the ineffable bliss arising from absorption into Brahma than Devotion to God. This is true of all ages and specially of the Kali Age. It should, however, be ascertained at the very outset what Devotion is. Devotion is as easy to talk of as it is difficult to practise. It does not consist in mere outward show, it is not something to be displayed; it is, on the contrary, something which should be treasured in the heart and guarded most scrupulously against publicity. The more secret it is kept, the more precious it is held to be. It is very difficult to understand the philosophy of Devotion. Of course, those blessed beings who have dedicated themselves to the All-merciful Lord, do not find it so difficult. The Lord Himself unfolds the secret of Bhakti to those who are exclusively devoted to Him. He rids them of all fears, who betake themselves to the Lord with a guileless heart. Such is His vow.

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्पीति च याचते।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद् व्रतं मम॥

(Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa VI. xviii. 33)

Dedication to the Lord is a valuable discipline, indeed; but it should be exclusive. Total and exclusive dependence immediately elicits the desired response from the Lord. Vibhīṣaṇa sought the shelter of Śrī Rāma with a sore heart, depending exclusively on His protection, and the Lord unhesitatingly extended His protection to him. No sooner did Princess Draupadī, in the court of the Kauravas, remember Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the refuge of the helpless, having despaired of relief from all other quarters, than the cloth which she was wrapped in was extended in length *ad infinitum*. These

are instances of exclusive surrender. The surrender in both these cases, however, had relief from worldly afflictions as its motive. A devotee should betake himself to the Lord in the same spirit of total dependence for the sake of the Lord Himself. Attainment of true knowledge will then be within easy reach.

Although the supreme idea of Devotion can be understood only by thus surrendering oneself to the Lord. I take the liberty of writing a few lines on this subject on the basis of the scriptures and the utterances of saints merely with a view to amusing myself, even though I do not deem myself competent to wield my pen on this subject, I would crave the indulgence of the blessed devotees of the Lord for this audacity.

Supreme, exclusive and motiveless love for God constitutes what is known as Bhakti or Devotion. *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* speaks of this at several places. For instance—

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।

(XIII. 10)

मां च योऽव्यभिचारेण भक्तियोगेन सेवते ॥

(XIV. 26) etc., etc.

“Unflinching devotion to Me through exclusive attachment of mind.”

“And he who constantly worships Me through the Yoga of exclusive devotion.”

The same idea is found echoed in the Aphorisms of Nārada and Śāṅkilya. Exclusive love is generally characterized by permanent absence of attachment to anything else than God, insensibility to everything else than God in the ecstasy of love and a vision of the Lord in everything that the mind perceives. In this way, as time goes on and the habit of perceiving God everywhere develops, the devotee forgets his own self and the Lord alone remains. This is what

constitutes motiveless, exclusive love. The love for God should have God alone or His love as its motive. He should be loved for the sake of love, and not with any ulterior motive. The aspirant should not retain in his mind even the ghost of a desire for honour, applause, high status, or for any other object of this or the next world. Nay, he should not be tempted even by the kingdom of the three worlds. Even if God Himself be pleased to offer him objects of worldly enjoyment with importunity, he should not accept them, and if his refusal displeases the Lord (although He is never displeased with anyone), he should not mind it. The very talk of personal gain should fill him with extreme disgust and abhorrence. Should the Lord make tempting offers of worldly enjoyments to him, he should be filled with remorse and feel that surely there is something wrong with his love; had it been genuine and unadulterated, and had such talk of personal gain really pricked him, the Lord would not have thought fit to tempt him with such offers. In no circumstances should he accept anything else than love of God, not even under pressure of solicitations, importunities and intimidations; he should remain firm and unmoved in his insistence on love. He should continue to believe that so long as the Lord thinks fit to tempt him with offers of various worldly enjoyments and thus put his devotion to test, attachment to worldly pleasures surely exists in his mind. Had he possessed genuine love, he should not have heard anything else than the talk of his beloved Lord. The very fact that he is still able to see, hear of, and put up with the presence of objects of enjoyment show that he is not yet eligible for true love. That is why the Lord still persists in tempting him. The ideal thing for him would have been that he should have fainted at the very mention of worldly enjoyment. Since this does not

happen, a craving for worldly enjoyments surely lurks somewhere in his heart. Such is the form of the higher mental discipline for attaining pure and unadulterated love of God.

The joy which results from the attainment of such faultless love can better be imagined than described. The real value of such love can be appraised only by one who is exclusively devoted to the Lord. Love is ordinarily classified under three heads; secondary, primary and exclusive. For instance, a cow goes into the woods for grazing, leaving the young calf behind, and grazes there. The cow's love for grass is only secondary, that for the calf is of first importance and that for her own life is exclusive. She can give up grass for the sake of her calf and abandon even the latter for the sake of her own life. Similarly, aspirants of the highest class have their mind exclusively fixed on God even while engaged in their worldly duties. The ordinary type of lovers of God endeavour to concentrate their mind on God; but due to habit and attachment their mind wanders away in spite of themselves to worldly objects, even while they are sitting in meditation or saying their prayers. Those who have God as the main object of their love perform all their worldly duties with their mind constantly fixed on Him, while those who have God as the exclusive object of their love find their Beloved pervading the whole creation, animate as well as inanimate. Such exalted souls are, however, rarely to be seen. (*vide Gītā VII. 19*)*

Some of these blessed devotees, the exclusive object of whose love is God, are so deeply immersed in divine love that they appear like madmen in the eyes of the world, while others behave like children. They are no longer able

* वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः।

to perform their worldly duties. There are still others who, though equally immersed in divine love, are yet always ready to carry out the behests of their Lord like the great devotee Bharata and Hanumān, the Prince among devotees. All activities of such devotees are directed towards the good of humanity. Such blessed souls do not forget the Lord even for a moment, nor can the Lord ever forget them. He has proclaimed this truth in the following memorable couplet.

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति॥

(Gītā VI. 30)

“He who sees Me (the Universal Self) present in all beings, and sees all beings existing in Me, I am never out of sight of him nor is he ever out of sight of Me.”

What is God ?

What is God ? All that I propose to say on this subject is my own conviction; it is not unlikely that this may be wrong. I do not assert that the conclusion arrived at by others on the subject is wrong. But I have no doubt in my mind about the conviction I have formed; I am not a doubting soul on the subject, though I have no right to pronounce the opinion of others as fallacious.

What is God ? Of this question, the proper answer is that God alone knows what He is. Besides this, the God-realized soul who has known the reality about Him may give some indication of what is approximate to the reality. As a matter of fact, the reality about God is known only by God Himself; realizers of the truth may give some description of Him in the form of hints or suggestions, but whatever is known and described about Him, He is actually far different from that. The Vedas, the scriptures, the saints and sages have gone on describing Him from time immemorial but their descriptions have not yet come to an end. If anyone attempts to describe that reality either by synthesizing those statements or analysing them, a complete description will not be possible even by him. It will remain incomplete and unfinished. From these observations it is clear that God certainly exists; there is not the slightest doubt about His existence; this conclusion is quite unshakable. Therefore, when a person has taken to the practice of a discipline by forming a certain conviction about God in his mind, there is no need to alter the same, but some improvement in the conviction should, of course, be made. Truly speaking; none of those, who are engaged in the practice of a discipline, is in error; and from another point of view, all are

in error. He who starts the practice of a discipline for the realization of God follows a path which leads to God therefore, he is not in error; and yet he is in error, because whatever conception he has formed in the mind about the object of attainment or goal of the practice, the reality is far, far different from it. That which is known, conceived of, and for which a practice is undertaken, is nothing but a hint or gesture to point at the object, God. Therefore so long as that object is not gained, all are said to be merged in error; but this should not lead one to the conclusion that, first of all, the error should be removed, and then a discipline undertaken. None can ever remove the error first; after true realization it gets automatically removed. What transpires before this is a subject of mere inference, and whatever is practised according to inference, is the proper way of realization of the goal. For instance, one has seen the moon on the second day of the lunar fortnight, he now points to it through gesture to another person who has not seen it by saying, "May you look through my eyes, there is the moon above that tree, at a height of four finger's breadth from the tree." This statement leads the observer's gaze through the tree to the moon, and he succeeds in seeing the moon. As a matter of fact, the observer neither sees entering the eyes of the instructor, nor is the moon actually at a height of four finger's breadth from the tree, nor is the disc of the moon as small as it appears to him. But the eye being directed to the object, he succeeds in seeing it. In order to point out the moon of the second day of the lunar fortnight, some furnish an idea hereof with the help of a reed, and some to make it clearer draw lines with lime or make a pencil sketch of it; but, in reality, none of these has any actual affinity with the moon. They contain neither the brightness of the moon, nor are they as large as it is, nor possess its other virtues. Even

so, God may be seen or realized when observed with the help of symbols. But the difference between the symbol and the reality of God is as great as the difference between the moon and the symbols used to indicate it. It may, indeed, be possible for a Yogi to acquaint us with the actual nature of the moon, but none can describe the reality about God, for it is not a thing which can be made subject to speech. It, is known only when actually realized. He also who realizes it, is not able to explain it. This is so far as the Reality is concerned.

Now, it is proposed to explain what should be the object of meditation of the Sādhaka, and how it can be comprehended. What I heard on this subject from saints, or gathered from a study and hearing on the scriptures, and what conviction has got firmly rooted in me through actual experience, will be placed before the reader. Whoever desires may put them into practice.

Meditation on the real form of God is not actually possible. So long as the eyes, mind and the intellect have no direct experience of God, whatever meditation is practised is based only on inference. But when this is done according to the instruction of saints or the scriptures, of taking a picture or image as model, it is possible for a Sādhaka to realize God. It has already been pointed out that there is no need to introduce any change in the form of meditation one may have chosen for himself. But there is certainly some scope for improvement.

How Meditation should be Practised

Some Sādhakas meditate on the Unmanifest Pure Brahma, some on His manifested two-armed form and some others on the four-armed form of Bhagavān Viṣṇu. As a matter of fact, just as Bhagavān Viṣṇu, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are one and the same, even so the Goddess or the Female Form of the Supreme

Deity, Śiva, Ganeśa and Sūrya (the sun-god) are not different from Him. It appears that Śrī Vedavyāsa composed eighteen Purāṇas in order to portray one God according to the various conception of the people. The Purāṇa bearing the name of a particular Deity gives precedence to that Deity by declaring him to be the Supreme God, the Creator, possessed of all virtues. In reality, however, one and the same God has been described through all those different names and forms. The Sādhaka may select the name and form according to his liking. If a person meditates on a pillar regarding it as God, it will be a meditation on God, provided his heart is fully fixed on the thought of God.

As between meditation on the Manifest and Unmanifest aspects of God, the latter is somewhat more difficult than the former. The result of both is the same; differences lie only in the procedure of practice. Sādhakas should, therefore, meditate on either the Unmanifest or Manifest aspect, according to their inclination or liking.

If worshippers of the Unmanifest aspect of God meditate on the Unmanifest without carrying in their mind the idea of the Manifest, there can be no objection; but if they carry on meditation on the Unmanifest, thoroughly realizing the truth about the Manifest, regarding Him as all-pervading and all-formed, their efforts will more quickly bear fruit. Success will be somewhat delayed if there is want of realization of the truth about the Manifest aspect of God.

Similarly, there is need for the worshipper* of the Manifest aspect to know the truth about the Unmanifest, all-pervading Brahma. This will make his success easier and quicker. In the *Gītā*, the Lord has extolled the practice of meditation done with a knowledge of his Glory.

* That is to say, those who constantly worship 'Me' (Personal God) on the lines laid down in the *Gītā* chapter XI verse 55.

मन्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।
श्रद्धया परयोपेतास्ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥

(Gītā XII. 2)

"I consider them to be the best Yogīs who, endowed with supreme faith, and ever united through meditation with Me, worship Me with the mind centred on Me."

As a matter of fact, meditation done on the Manifest aspect, realizing the glory of the Unmanifest, is the best and easiest discipline for the quick realization of God. The reality about God is, however, different from both those aspects, and cannot be meditated upon. There are several processes of meditation on the Unmanifest. The Sādhaka should adopt for himself whatever process appears easy for him. The result of all is the same. Some of these processes are being described below.

Following the directions given in the Gītā, chapter VI. verses 11 to 13, the Sādhaka should spend at least three hours regularly every day in the practice of meditation in a solitary place, taking his seat either in the Swastika or Siddha posture, fixing his gaze on the tip of the nose, or closing the eyes (as it suits him). If he cannot devote three hours to the practice, let him devote two hours; if he cannot devote two hours, let him devote at least one hour without fail. In the beginning, if his mind runs away from the practice, he may start with fifteen or twenty minutes, and gradually increase the time. Practice of meditation for three hours is indispensable for Sādhakas who desire God-realization quickly. Practice of Japa of the Divine Name renders exceptional help during meditation. All Names of God are equally efficacious—but in the path of meditation on the Unmanifest aspect, precedence is given to Om. Maharsi Patañjali says in his *Yoga-Darśana*—

तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः । तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम् ॥

(1.27-28)

“Om is synonymous with Him. Japa of this should be performed and its meaning (God) should be meditated upon.”

These two aphorisms are based on the aphorism ‘इश्वरप्रणिधानद्वा’ (*Yoga-Darśana* 1.23) which inculcates surrender to God. The first aphorism quoted above declares the Name of God, and the second advises practice of Japa of the Name and meditation on the Divine Form.

I do not propose here to enter on a discussion on the other views of Maharṣi Patañjali on God. My intention is only to point out that, according to Patañjali, meditation on the Form should be carried on together with Japa of the Divine Name, in order to fix the mind on the object of meditation. If any Sādhaka utters ‘Ānandamaya’ (Embodiment of Bliss), or ‘Vijñānāndaghana’ (Solid Form of Knowledge and Bliss) in the place of Om, there is nothing to object. Differences lie only in the Names; there is no difference in the result.

The best type of Japa is that which is performed by the mind, and which does not require the tongue to move, or the lips to utter any word. During the performance of this type of Japa the processes of meditation and Japa may proceed together with the four aspects of the Antaḥkarana (internal organ of perception and cognition). The mind and intellect are the chief determining; first, through the intellect, the Form of God, let the intellect be steadied on it and then let the mind repeat, again and again, the name of ‘Ānandamaya’ the all-pervading embodiment of Bliss. This is Japa and meditation, both combined. As a matter of fact; there is no special difference between the Japa of ‘Ānandamaya’ and meditation on the same. Both Japa and meditation may be carried on simultaneously. The second process is practice of Japa with the breath. In this process,

Japa of the Name is performed through the throat in rhythm with ingoing and outgoing breath. In other words, the Name is repeated with the breath, stopping the tongue and lips altogether. This is Japa through the Prāṇa, or vital air, it is also called worship through the vital air. This form of Japa also is of a superior type. If this practice does not become possible, let the mind be devoted to meditation, and the tongue to utterance of the Name; but in my opinion practice of Japa through the breath will be both easier and more profitable to the Sādhaka. This is so far as Japa is concerned; strictly speaking Japa should be practised during both the types of meditation, viz., meditation on the Unmanifest as well as on the Manifest. Now we shall deal with meditation on the Unmanifest aspect of God.

Retiring to a solitary place, and steadyng himself in his seat, let the Sādhaka practise as follows with a concentrated mind, regarding all things appearing to his sense and mind as illusory, let him go on renouncing the same. Whatever appears to him, let him regard the same as non-existent. Let him feel that the gross physical body, the sense of perception, mind and intellect, all are non-existent; thus negating everything, finally the faculty of negation of the negativing subject, that is, the faculty which negatives objects will also become silent and still. That faculty of negation is also called Knowledge, discrimination and cognition or Pratyaya; there are all functions of the pure Intellect. The Intellect which meditates on God, and negatives all other objects, by saying 'Not this, Not this' is its substratum and this is what is meant by 'नेति, नैति' in the Vedas. That faculty does not require to be renounced, it becomes quite automatically. For in the act of renunciation, the three dimensional experience between the subject, object and act of renunciation is bound to appear. That is why active renunciation is not possible in

that state, and it takes place automatically. Just as want of fuel will make the fire still, even so in the absence of object, the faculties of cognition will get wholly still. Then, whatever remains as residue is God in His reality. This is called seedless Samādhi.

तस्यापि निरोधे सर्वनिरोधान्तर्बीजः समाधिः ।

(Yoga 1.5)

Here it may be urged that after renunciation, the subject, or the renouncer, remains. He is small and God is great. How can that residue be described as God ? The question is, no doubt, relevant; but the residue is small, so long as regarding itself as confined to a limited space, it regards the whole space external to it as full of others. When all other objects are fully negated, what remains as the final residue is nothing but God and God alone. When the objective world is pulled up by the roots and thrown away (from consciousness) automatically God alone remains. When the limitations are destroyed, all differences and divisions cease to exist, and one infinite God is left as remainder who fills up everywhere, and pervades all time and space, In reality, time and space also are fancied in Him. He is the one substance, standing by Himself indescribable and inconceivable. When all thoughts are wholly renounced, it is then that the hidden store of inconceivable Brahma reveals itself, and the Sādhaka gets mingled with it. So long as under the shelter of Ignorance, other objects remained, that store remained hidden from view. With the cessation of Ignorance one substance alone is left behind; under the circumstance, absorption in that substance, in other words, the existence of one object, after all thoughts are stilled, is incontrovertible.

The sky within the pot is separated from the broad external sky, so long as the pot is not broken, the breaking of the pot is synonymous with the destruction of Ignorance;

but this example also does not wholly cover the point. For when the pot is broken to pieces, its broken parts cover some portion of the sky, but when ignorance is destroyed, nothing is left to screen even the least part of Knowledge. With the removal of error, the world wholly ceases to be. Then, what is left as remainder is Brahma. The sky within the pot, in this example, is the Jīva, or individual soul, and the wide, external sky is God. When the limitation in the form of the pot is broken, the two become one. They were one even before, but appeared as different owing to the barriers created by the limitations.

Really speaking, the example of the sky is not entirely applicable in the case of God. The sky is inert; God is not inert. The sky is an object of sight; God is no such object. The sky is subject to change, God is changeless. The sky is not everlasting; it is destroyed during final Dissolution (Mahāpralaya); God is everlasting, eternal. The sky is void, it contains every other thing; God is compact and solid, other things, can have no place in Him. Thus, God is wholly different from the sky. In a part of Brahma lies Māyā, which is called unmanifest Prakṛti; in a part of Māyā lies Mahat-Tattva (Universal Intellect) from which is derived the intellect of others. In a part of that Intellect is the Ego, in a part of the Ego is the sky (ether), in a part of the sky (ether) is air, in air is fire, in fire water and in water the earth. From this process of creation it is proved that the whole universe lies in a part of Māyā, and Māyā lies in a part of God. According to this reasoning, in comparison with God, the sky is extremely small; but this knowledge of its insignificance is gained only after the realization of God. For instance, a person is going through the experience of a dream. In the state of dream, he sees the quarters, time, sky, air, fire, sun, moon, day, night and all other things; they

appear very extensive; but immediately his eyes are open, the whole of that creation vanishes. Thereafter he realizes that creation of his thought was within him. What was within him was certainly smaller than him, and he is greater than that creation of thought. As a matter of fact, it had no real existence, it was nothing but a thought; but if it had existence it was extremely small and lay in a part of him. And because it was his thought, it was not separate from him. This knowledge comes when the eyes are opened, that is, after awakening. Even so, when the soul gets awakened in the reality of God, the creation ceases to exist.

If it is regarded to exist anywhere, then according to the statements of saints, it exists in a mere fractional part of God, only in His thought.

That is why the example of the sky cannot be fully applied in the case of God. It is true only to this extent, that just as the sky appears formless to the eye of man, even so Brahma is really formless or Unmanifest. Just as the sky appears infinite to the eye of man, even so Brahma is True and Infinite. The example of the sky is cited in order to make these ideas conform to the human intellect. When all those things are negated, what is left as the remainder; none can describe its character; it is an exceptional, extraordinary thing. Saints possessed of subtle vision, who have realized the subtle nature of things, call it as 'सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म'—“Brahma, who is Truth, Consciousness and Infinity.” He is boundless, unlimited, Self-conscious, the Knower, compact embodiment of Bliss, Happiness itself, true and eternal. These are the attributes to indicate that extraordinary thing. When He is realized, man gets over the risk of any fall. Misery, pain, evil, grief, limitation, distraction, ignorance and sin—all these impurities cease entirely for all time. There is full dawning of one Brahma who is Truth,

Knowledge, Consciousness and Bliss. The word “dawning” is used only to convey a faint impression. What actually happens cannot be, as a matter of fact, expressed in words.

अनादिमत्यरं ब्रह्म न सत्त्वासदुच्यते ।

(Gītā XIII. 12)

“That beginningless supreme Brahma is said to be neither Sat (being) nor Asat (non-being).”

If we describe Him as the Enjoyer of Knowledge, then there is no object of enjoyment. If we call Him Knowledge and Happiness itself, then there is no Enjoyer. Enjoyer, enjoyment and the object of enjoyment all are reduced to one. In Him, all triangular experiences (Triputi) cease. This is one method of meditation on the Unmanifest.

The Second Process

Seated in a solitary place, and closing his eyes, let the Sādhaka reflect that a flood has come in the ocean of Sat, Cit and Ānanda (Truth, Knowledge and Bliss), and that he is sinking deep in that flood; that he is merged in the ocean of infinite Knowledge and Bliss. The whole universe existed in the thought of God. He has renounced the thought, therefore the world including me being annihilated, everywhere one God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss remains. Being engaged in the meditation on God, he (the Sādhaka) is in the thought of God, except Him every other object has been negated. When God will give up the thought of the Sādhaka, he also will cease to exist, and God alone will remain. If instead of giving up his thought, God keeps him in mind, even then it is a matter of gratification and delight. Let the Sādhaka thus worship the Unmanifest, maintaining his separate individuality.

In this process, separateness remains during the period of practice, and at the stage of realization identity with God

is established, God gives up His thought, therefore He alone remains. This is one process. Besides this, there are other processes of meditation on the Unmanifest, two of which have been described in the chapter on "Means of Realization of True Happiness" to which the reader is referred. In short, there are two methods of meditation on the Unmanifest viz., through the conceptions of separateness and identity. The fruit of both the methods is God-realization in identity. Those who regarding the Jīva (individual soul) as finite do not conceive it as ever identical with God; attain liberation of a limited type. They do not attain eternal liberation. After Universal Dissolution, they have to return. According to this theory of Liberation, they remain separate even after the attainment of Brahma.

Now, the subject of meditation on the Manifest will be dealt with. The fruit of worship of the Manifest may be of both the types. If the Sādhaka seeks immediate Liberation, or complete union with Pure Brahma, he may attain such union, or immediate Liberation. But if he wants that becoming a servant, associate or friend, he should enjoy Divine Love by living near God, or maintaining his separate individuality serve God by preaching in the world the message of Divine Love, in that case he may attain, according to his desire, any of the types of liberation known as Sālokya (residence with God), Sārūpya (attainment of God's Form), Sāmīpya (nearness to God), Sāyujya (Identity with God), etc., and after death pass on to the Eternal Supreme Abode of God. Living in that eternal region till final Dissolution, he ultimately gets united with God, or may also take birth as a Kāraka Puruṣa for the redemption of the world, but birth does not cause him any entanglement. Māyā can inflict no misery or suffering on him, and he remains eternally liberated. The Eternal Abode, where such a Sādhaka goes, is above all

regions and is the best of regions. Beyond it, there is nothing else but Unmanifest Pure Brahma, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. It eternally exists; in other words, when other regions are destroyed, it remains. What is the character of that region is known to him alone who reaches that region, when all the different imaginary conception about it are transformed into the real truth. Mahātmās say that devotees who reach that region attain almost all the powers and Siddhis possessed by God, but they never make use of them as against the process of God's creation. He who becoming the servant, friend or associate of the glorious Lord, constantly lives near Him in His Supreme Abode, always acts following His behests. Verse 24 of chapter VIII of the *Gitā* speaks referring to Sādhakas who go to this Supreme Abode. The *Bṛhadāranyaka* and *Chāndogya* Upaniṣads contain detailed descriptions of this luminous path; it is this eternal Abode which is perhaps called as Goloka by the worshippers of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and as Sāketaloka by the worshippers of Bhagavān Śrī Rāma. The Vedas describe it as Satyaloka or Brahmaloka. (It is not the Brahmaloka in which Brahmā resides, and which has been described in the first line of verse 16 of chapter VIII of the *Gitā*.) In His Manifest Form, God resides in this Eternal Abode. Lack of faith in the Eternal Abode, while having faith in the Manifest aspect of God, is, indeed, a great error.

How God assumes the Manifest Form for the sake of Devotees

God, the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss, in His eternal, boundless aspect pervades everywhere. Fire may be mentioned as an analogous example in its unmanifest state. Fire is present everywhere, and becomes

manifest when effort is made towards it, with the help of materials which can bring it into manifestation. When manifested, the form of the Fire appears equal in length and breadth to the wood through which it is manifested. Even so, according to the wish of the devotee, all-pervading, invisible, subtle and formless God reveals Himself by assuming a Form. In reality, the example of the pervasiveness of Fire also is imperfect; for where there is only ether and air, Fire does not exist, but God is present everywhere completely. Therefore, the pervasiveness of God is superior to all, and most extraordinary. There is no place where God is not. And in the whole of creation, there is no such spot where God's Māyā is not present. Where there are time and space, Māyā is there. God can, therefore, reveal Himself anywhere He likes through this material in the form of Māyā. Where there is water as well as cold, ice may be formed. Where there is earth and the potter; a pot may be formed. Water and earth may, perhaps, be unobtainable at places; but God and His Māyā are present everywhere throughout creation. Under the circumstances, where lies the difficulty in His manifesting Himself ? What is wanted is only the devotee's Love.

“Hari (God) pervades everywhere equally;
Through Love, He is manifested; this I have known,”*

All people can reason about the pervasiveness of the Unmanifest, but in His Manifest Form, God can be seen only by the devotee. God is all-powerful, and can do whatever He pleases. To one, to many, or to all people at once, He can vouchsafe His vision; this depends on His will. True, like the play of a child, that will of His is not tainted with defect. His will is ever perfect. The wish of the

* हरि व्यापक सर्वत्र समाना । प्रेम तें प्रगट होहिं मैं जाना ॥

devotee also follows the will of God. The Lord said that He resides in the heart of the devotee. This is true. Just as Fire in its unmanifest state is present in our bodies, even so God in His Unmanifest form of Sat, Cit and Ānanda is present in every heart, but the heart of the devotee being pure, He can be directly seen there. This is the speciality of the devotee's heart. The reflection of the sun falls equally on wood, stone and a mirror, but it is not seen in stone. Even so, God though present in every heart cannot be seen in the wood-like impure heart of the man without devotion, and can be directly observed in the transparent, mirror-like spotless heart of the devotee. What may be the devotee's conception during meditation, in that Form does He lodge Himself in the devotee's heart.

The Mahātmās say that where Kīrtana is performed, God Himself remains present there in His manifest form. The devotee also engaged in Kīrtana sees Him in that manifest form. This should not be regarded as a mere projection of the mind of the devotee. He sees the Lord truly, and as a matter of fact, what is seen only as an appearance in an act of Māyā. God is, however the Lord of Māyā. The belief of the saint is true that—

मद्दक्ता यत्र गायन्ति तत्र तिष्ठामि नारद॥ *

(Ādipurāṇa 19. 35)

It is possible that though present in Kīrtana in His Manifest Form, God is not actually seen by a person; nevertheless it is conducive to spiritual good to cultivate the faith that He is Himself present there.

God can manifest Himself when He likes, wherever He likes, and in whatever Form He likes, according to the wish of the devotee; therefore whatever Form the

* "O Nārada, I am present where My devotees sing and chant."

devotee meditates upon, the result is the same. He may meditate either on Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the embodiment of blue-coloured Beauty, adorned with a crown containing the peacock's feather, or on Bhagavān Śrī Rāma armed with the bow and arrow the Best Person who established propriety of conduct. He may meditate either on Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu, holding the conch, the circular weapon Cakra, the club and the lotus, or on the Universal Form of God. It is all the same. Whatever Form one meditates upon should be regarded as the fullest manifestation of God. Similarly, Japa also may be performed, according to one's taste and liking, of Om, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Hari, Nārāyaṇa, Śiva, or any other Divine Name; the result of all is the same. Some processes of meditation on God's Form with attributes have been described in the chapter on "Lessons in Devotion and Divine Love" and "True Happiness and the Means of its Realization."* The attention of the reader is drawn to them.

Now, it is proposed to say something about the Universal Form of God. The Form which the Lord revealed before Arjuna was no doubt His Universal Form. And this Universe itself described in the Vedas as Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Swaḥ (the earth, the intermediate region and the heaven) is also the Lord's Universal Form. Both are the same. The entire Universe itself is God's Form. In everything movable and immovable, God is present. To respect and serve the Universe regarding it as God's Form, means offering of respect and service to God Himself in His Universal Form. The imperfections and impurities of the Universe are not present in God. These are mere sports like the play of the magician. The name and

* The original of those two articles in Hindi have been reprinted as booklets and may had from the Gītā Press.

form—all are sports. God ever exists in His own state of being. Like water in the ice, He in His unmanifest state fills everywhere. The water itself is seen as the solid mass of ice; in reality it is nothing. Even so, the Universe is seen in pure Brahma; as a matter of fact, it does not exist.

In his Saguṇa aspect, like the Fire, even though unmanifest, He is all-pervading; He can manifest Himself wherever He likes. This is what has been stated above. This all-pervading God is called Viṣṇu. The word Viṣṇu itself means all-pervading.

God is above the Guṇas, is endowed with all
Guṇas good and bad, and is possessed
of only virtuous Guṇas

No Guṇa exists in God, He is above the Guṇas; all Guṇas good and bad, exist in Him; again He is possessed only of virtues, there is no trace of vice in Him—all these three statements may be made with reference to God. This subject should be properly understood.

The reality about pure Brahma, Unmanifest, Conscious, embodiment of Knowledge and Bliss, and all-pervading God, is wholly beyond all the Guṇas. All virtues and vices in the world originate from Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—these three Guṇas are included in Māyā, that is why the latter is called Māyā, consisting of the three Guṇas. Among them Sattva is best, Rajas is intermediate and Tamas is lowest. God is exceptionally different from this Māyā, wholly beyond and free from the Guṇas; that is why He is called Pure. Therefore, He is above the Guṇas.

Māyā does not exist in reality; when her existence is conceived of, it is only an imagination. She is fancied to exist in a part of God, virtues and vices all take place in

Māyā. According to this reasoning, the entire world consisting of virtues like truth, compassion, renunciation, discrimination etc., and vices like lust, anger, greed, infatuation etc., is superimposed on God. That is why all virtues and vices may be regarded as established in Him. Under the circumstance, He may be described as endowed with all Guṇas, good and bad.

God, the Creator, or Brahma qualified by Māyā, in whom this Universe is included, is not different from Pure Brahma; He manifests Himself subordinating Māyā and incarnates Himself on earth from time to time. That is why He is called ‘qualified by Māyā’. In the *Gītā* it is stated—

अजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

(IV. 6)

“Though unborn and immortal, and also the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My own Yogamāyā (divine potency) keeping My Nature (Prakṛti) under control.”

Just as God incarnates Himself on earth, even so He manifests Himself in the beginning of creation, subordinating Māyā to Himself. That manifestation is called Viṣṇu. That Primeval Being, Viṣṇu, is possessed of all the Sāttvic qualities. He is the very embodiment of Sattva. He is adorned with Sāttvic energy, glory, power, majesty etc. The divine qualities are the same as Sattvaguṇa. Pure Sattva is His Form. Vices exist in Rajas and Tamas. Love takes place between those who resemble one another in nature and are equals. That is why, devotees who possess the divine virtues, are said to be the proper persons to gain the vision of God. The Saguna aspect of God, qualified by Māyā, comes down on earth from time to time together with Māyā. He is possessed of all virtues. He is pure, free, Lord and all-powerful. There is nothing which He cannot

perform. That is why, though in reality Rajas and Tamas do not exist in that embodiment of pure Sattva, the Saguṇa, Manifest Form of God, nevertheless, He can perform acts which are expressions of Rajas and Tamas. Bhagavān Viṣṇu is observed to perform act of violence in the course of chastisement of the wicked. From the human standpoint, this may appear as violence or a manifestation of Tamas; but as a matter of fact violence has no place in Him. Being the dispenser of justice, He has to act according to the circumstance. King Janaka was a liberated soul and was exceptionally Sāttvic in nature, but being a ruler, administration of justice was his function. He had even to inflict punishment on thieves. There is nothing objectionable in this. The mother in order to train up her dear child threatens it, and now and then, when she finds it necessary, gives a slap or two, with a heart full of thoughts of the child's welfare, but the act is an expression of her compassion for the child. Even so, the chastisement of God, the Ocean of mercy, the Executor of Justice, is also full of compassion. The Kāma or desire sanctioned by Dharma is also God. The Lord said—

धर्माविरुद्धो भूतेषु कामोऽस्मि भरतर्षभ !

The sexual desire not conflicting with virtues is He, not the sinful desire. God is Sat (good); He is Sāttvic. He is pure Sattva. He is imbued with the pure, Sāttvic Vidyā (Knowledge), The Jīva is imbued with Avidyā or Ignorance. In Vidyā, there is Knowledge and Light. How can vice and darkness find any place there ? Vice lies with Avidyā or Ignorance. According to this reasoning, God is imbued with pure, unadulterated virtue.

The above discussion proves that God may be described as beyond the Guṇas, as imbued with both virtue and vice, and also as imbued with pure, unadulterated Sattvaguṇa.

The Reality about God or Union of the Unmanifest and Manifest Forms

There are three states of the body—the gross, subtle and causal. The body which is seen through the eyes is the gross body, that which goes to the other world after death is the subtle body, and that which gets absorbed in Māyā is the causal body. These three divisions of the body can be seen even everyday. In the waking state, the gross body functions. In the dream state, the subtle body, and in deep sleep, the causal body remains. Similarly, God also may be described to possess three states. That which remains during Final Dissolution is the causal body of God; the whole universe gets dissolved into it and remains there. At that time God and His Prakṛti alone remain; all Jīvas get absorbed into Prakṛti. In Jīvas also there are parts of both Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Consciousness is the part of God, and ignorance is the part of Prakṛti. Owing to identification with Māyā, Jīvas do not get liberated even during Final Dissolution. After that, in the beginning of a new creation, they wake up according to their respective Karmas, like men waking up from sleep. In this way, the form of God during Final Dissolution may be described as His causal form.

The subtle form of God is present everywhere; He is called the First or Primal Person. He is the original cause of Creation. His name is Puruṣottama, the Best Person, and God, the Creator.

In his gross form, God eternally exists in His Supreme Abode as Bhagavān Viṣṇu, the holder of the conch, the circular weapon Cakra, the club and lotus.

According to the very conception of the devotee God assumes His Form. The whole of this Universe is God's

Body, and our bodies are included in that Body. According to this argument we all exist in Him.

There is another truth which should be properly understood. When the sky is clear and the sun is up nothing is observed in the sky between the sun and us, nevertheless there is existence of water there. It will have to be agreed that between the sun and us, the region is full of water, but that water cannot be seen because it exists in the subtle or atomic state. When it becomes thicker, it begins to manifest itself. Vapour is produced by the heat of the sun, when that vapour becomes thicker it is transformed into cloud and the cloud is transformed into water. When the cloud passes a high hill, the visitor to the hill gets his clothes wet even though there may be no rain. When water particles become thicker in the cloud, drops are formed, and when thicker still, hails are formed and rained down on earth. That very hail or ice when touched by heat gets dissolved into water, and greater heat reduces it to vapour, which rising to the sky gets out of sight. Thus, finally, water is reduced to its atomic, unmanifest state. These very subtle atoms of water cannot be seen even with the help of a powerful lens that magnifies objects a thousand times, but water certainly exists in that state; if it did not, wherefrom does it come ?

The reality about God should be understood with the help of this example. It is said in the *Gitā*—

अक्षरं ब्रह्म परमं स्वभावोऽध्यात्ममुच्यते ।
भूतभावोद्भवकरो विसर्गः कर्मसंज्ञितः ॥
अधिभूतं क्षरो भावः पुरुषश्चाधिदैवतम् ।
अधियज्ञोऽहमेवात्र देहे देहभूतांवर ॥

(VIII. 3-4)

Of the seven questions of Arjuna, the sixth was this— What is Brahma ? What is Adhyātma ? What is

Karma ? What is Adhibhūta ? What is Adhidaiva? And What is Adhiyajña? In the above verses, the Lord has given His reply to the questions. He said the supreme Indestructible is Brahma, one's own self (the Jīvātmā) is Adhyātma, the discharge of spirits (Visarga) which brings forth the existence of beings is Karma, all perishable objects are Adhibhūta, Hiranyagarbha, or the Second Puruṣa (Brahmā) as Universal Life is the Adhidaiva, and Adhiyajña in the form of the unmanifest, all-pervading Viṣṇu am Myself.

This may be understood as follows with the help of the above example.

(1) In the place of the atomic state of water—

God as pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss; beyond the Guṇas in Whom this universe was neither ever created, nor exists; who is absolute, transcendent, supreme, indestructible.

(2) Water in the form of vapour—

That very pure Brahma in the form of Adhiyajña, unmanifest, all-pervading God, possessed of Māyā.

(3) Cloud

This is Adhidaiva, the life of every being, Hiranyagarbha or Brahmā. The collection of seventeen Tattvas is called subtle; among these Tattvas Prāṇa, or vital air, is the chief. The Prāṇas of all beings combined make the Universal Prāṇa; this Universal Prāṇa remains during Pralaya, of partial destruction, but not during final dissolution. The aggregate of seventeen Tattvas make the subtle body of Hiranyagarbha Brahmā.

(4) The drops of water in lakhs and crores—

The Jīvas of the world.

(5) Rain—

The action of the Jīvas.

(6) Hail or Ice—

The grossest form of the five elements.

The state of this creation is so very gross and transient that the slightest heat will immediately dissolve it, like hail dissolved into water. Heat, in this example, is that luminous flame of wisdom which when produced dissolves the gross creation in the form of hail.

Ignorance is the same as cloud. Whatever the amount of ignorance, such is grossness; whatever the amount of Knowledge, such is subtlety. The greater the weight of a thing, the lower it falls; the lighter it is, the higher it rises. Ignorance is weight; when water is extremely gross and becomes ice it has to go down; even so the Jīva becoming gross through the weight of Ignorance has to go down.

As soon as the heat of Knowledge is obtained, the weight of the world goes down one's back. Just as when greater heat is applied to water, it becomes vapour and goes up, even so the Jīva goes up.

The Jīvātmā (individual soul) is identical with God Himself, but when it comes gross through inertia and Ignorance, it suffers a fall. Ignorance is the cause of descent, and Knowledge is the cause of ascent. When it once rises to the last limit of ascent, the Jīvātmā does not, again, suffer a fall. In its conception, everything becomes God Himself; and in reality, all is but one. Atom, vapour, cloud, drop of rain and hail—all this is nothing but water.

According to this argument, all objects, are in reality God; that is why, God manifests Himself in whatever manner He likes, whenever He likes, wherever and in whatever form He likes. When this Knowledge is gained, the Sādhaka sees God alone everywhere. Water is seen everywhere, when the truth about water is known; in the atom it is water, in the hail it is so. In the subtlest state it is

water, as well as in the grossest. Even so, one God alone exists in all subtle and gross objects.

'अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान्।'

This is union between the Unmanifest and the Manifest.

Egoism grows through ignorance, the more there is of Egoism, the more will one take to objects of the world. The more there is the weight of worldly possession, the more will one go down. There are three Guṇas, among them, Tamoguṇa is the heaviest; that is why the person possessed of Tamoguṇa falls low. Rajoguṇa is of medium weight, that is why the being possessed of Rajoguṇa remains among men, in the middle. Sattvaguṇa is light, and the person possessed of Sattvaguṇa goes up towards God.

'ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्थाः'

'मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः'

'अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः'

Light things float on the surface, heavy things get submerged. The demoniac qualities are the marks of Tamoguṇa, that is why they take one down. Sattvaguṇa being light takes one up. The divine qualities are the marks of Sattvaguṇa, they are the possession of God. The more these possessions increase, the more the Sādhaka goes up nearer to God.

In this way, one and the same God should be regarded as pervading all gross and subtle objects.

In His all-pervading aspect, God sees all and knows all.

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्।

सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोके सर्वमावृत्य तिष्ठति॥

(Gita XIII. 13)

What is the character of that object of Knowledge? He is possessed of hands and feet on all sides, eyes on all sides, head, face and ears on all sides. There is no place where He is not, no sound which He does not hear, no sight which He

does not see, no object which He does not take, and no region where He has no access.

We offer Him eatables and he immediately eats them. We offer Him praises, and He hears them. He sees everyone of our acts, but we cannot see Him. With reference to this the question arises, how do all the senses of the same Person remain everywhere ? How does the nose remain where the ears are. In reply, it may be said that the objection is no doubt relevant, but the case of God is different from this. His is a transcendent power, and everything is possible in His case. Imagine a heap of gold in which rings, bracelets, necklaces and other ornaments are everywhere present, and all those things can be obtained from whatever points one likes. Even so, God alone is such in whom all things are everywhere present, and everything can proceed from Him. Who can hear, all at once, words uttered at all places by everyone and who can see everyone, all at once.

In the state of dream, though there are no eyes, ears, nose etc., the mind itself does every act, and itself sees and hears. It itself acts as the seer, seeing and the object of sight. Even so, the power of God is most extraordinary. It is capable in every way of doing everything at every place. This constitutes His Divinity and Universality.

This Universe constitutes the Body of God in His Manifest aspect. Just as ice is the solid form of water but not essentially different from it, is the Universe also just like that? Is the physical body also God ?

The reply to this may be given by saying both 'yes' and 'no'. If anyone serves this body and gives comfort to it, I regard it as my service and my comfort, but as a matter of fact I am not the body; I am the soul. But so long as I call this body of three and a half cubits as 'I' I am the body. Under the circumstance, the whole of animate and inanimate creation is

God, all should render it service, its service is the service of God, and to make the world happy is bringing happiness to God. And when I am not the physical body, the Universe, as the body, also is not God. So long as this body is mine, that Body is God's. So long as we are His parts, He is the whole. But, really, in the end, it is proved that we are the soul, and not the body. But till it is not so, we should proceed precisely as above. When true Knowledge is gained, one, taintless Brahma alone will remain.

From this point of view, the Unmanifest and Manifest aspect of God are one and the same. The world is a superimposition on God. The Mahātmās say that it is like the conception of the snake in the rope; in reality it does not exist. The world in the dream state appears within us; the water in the mirage is only an appearance. Even so, the world is an appearance in God. The Mahātmās alone know the truth about it. After awakening, it is the awakened soul which truly realizes the falsity of the dreamworlds. So long as this is not realized, means should be adopted. The Means is this—

Through meditation of either the Unmanifest or Manifest form, whatever one and only one supreme object is realized, surrendering oneself to that God, from every point of view, service should be rendered to Him through the senses and the body. Remembrance of Him through the minds, utterance on His Name through the breath, hearing of His glory through the ears, making the body act according to His dictates—these are His service; the practice of this is true Devotion; and through this alone the soul's redemption may be quickly gained.

Means of Attaining Kalyāṇa (Blessedness)

The state of salvation (Mukti) is called Kalyāṇa (blessedness). It signifies attainment of the supreme state or supreme condition. To attain blessedness, three means are primary— Disinterested Action (Karmayoga), Knowledge (Jñāna or Sāṅkhyayoga), and Devotion (Bhakti or Dhyānyoga). Among them, Devotion may be practised both as a separate discipline as well as with the practices of Disinterested Action (Karmayoga) and Knowledge (Sāṅkhyayoga).

Karmayoga has been described in detail in the *Gītā* Chap. II, verse 39 to 53, and the marks of the person who has attained perfection through its practice have been described in verses 54 to 72 of the same chapter.

Jñānayoga has been described at length in chapter II, verse 11 to 30; and, according to it, in chapter III, verse 28, chapter V, verses 8 and 9, and chapter XIV, verse 19—the mode of action of the Jñānayogi has been given. Besides this, chapter V, verses 13 to 26 describe Jñāna (Knowledge), and chapter XVIII, verses 49 to 55 describe the practice of Jñānayoga together with Devotion.

Chapter V verses 27—29, Chapter VI verses 11—32, chapter VIII verses 5—22, chapter IX verses 30—34, chapter X verses 8—12, chapter XI verses 35—55, and chapter XII verses 2—8 deal with Dhyānayoga or Bhaktiyoga. Both these forms of Yoga are essentially one. In other verses of the *Gītā* also these three disciplines have been described in different ways. Among them, in the present age, the easiest and best means of attaining blessedness is

the practice of disinterested Karmayoga together with Devotion. This has been very beautifully laid down in the following eleven verses of chapter XVIII of the *Gītā*—

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa says—

सर्वकर्मण्यपि सदा कुर्वणो मदव्यपाश्रयः ।
मत्प्रसादादवाप्नोति शाश्वतं पदमव्ययम् ॥
चेतसा सर्वकर्मणि मयि संन्यस्य मत्परः ।
बुद्धियोगमुपाश्रित्य मच्चित्तः सततं भव ॥
मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात्तरिष्यसि ।
अथ चेत्त्वमहंकारान् श्रोष्यसि विनिझ्यसि ॥
यदहंकारमाश्रित्य न योत्स्य इति मन्यसे ।
मिथ्यैष व्यवसायस्ते प्रकृतिस्त्वां नियोक्ष्यति ॥
स्वभावजेन कौन्तेय निबद्धः स्वेन कर्मणा ।
कर्तुं नेच्छसि यन्मोहात्करिष्यस्यवशोऽपि तत् ॥
ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृदेशोऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन्सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढानि मायया ॥
तपेब शरणं गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रसादात्परां शान्तिं स्थानं प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम् ॥
इति ते ज्ञानमाख्यातं गुह्यादगुह्यतरं मया ।
विमृश्यैतदशेषेण यथेच्छसि तथा कुरु ॥
सर्वगुह्यतमं भूयः श्रृणु मे परमं वचः ।
इष्टोऽसि मे दृढमिति ततो वक्ष्यामि ते हितम् ॥
मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि सत्यं ते प्रतिजाने प्रियोऽसि मे ॥
सर्वधर्मान्यरित्यन्य मामेकं शरणं द्रज ।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥

(*Gītā* XVIII. 56—66)

“And the Karmayogī, who has taken refuge in Me, though ever performing all actions, attains through My grace the eternal, imperishable abode.

Therefore, mentally surrendering all actions to Me and with Myself as your sole Object; have your mind constantly fixed on Me resorting to the Yoga of equanimity.

With your mind thus fixed on Me, you shall get over all difficulties by My grace. And if out of pride you will not listen to Me, you will be utterly destroyed.

If, prompted by egoism, you think 'I will not fight', this determination of yours is vain; nature will compel you to fight.

Arjuna, that which from delusion you do not want to do, bound by your own duty born of your nature, you will helplessly perform.

Arjuna, the Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, who are mounted on the automaton of this body, causing them by his illusive power to revolve (according to their actions).

Seek refuge in Him alone with all your being, Arjuna. Through His grace you shall obtain supreme peace and the eternal abode.

Thus has knowledge, more secret than secrecy itself, been imparted to you by Me. Having reflected on it fully, do as you like.

Hear, again, My supreme word, the most secret of all. You are very dear to Me; therefore, I shall tender you this salutary advice.

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and bow to Me; so shall you without doubt reach Me. This I truly promise to you; for you are dear to Me.

Surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins, grieve not."

What a divine teaching! Besides, among books on Dhyānayoga and Bhaktiyoga, *Yogadarśana* by Patañjali is the principal book on Dhyānayoga, and the Aphorisms of Nārada and Śāṇḍilya are the principal books on Bhaktiyoga. There are, no doubt, some differences of opinion in these books but Bhaktiyoga is the subject

which they expound. Through their study, a good deal of knowledge on Bhaktiyoga may be obtained.

Instead of writing at length, I have only given some hints to the reader by quoting some verses of the *Gītā*, and giving only the numbers of certain other verses. In my opinion if any reader reflecting on the meaning of these verses begins to regulate his life according to them, the supremely blessed state of salvation may be very easily attained by him.

The Philosophy of Blessedness

Everlasting freedom from all sorts of pains, passions, qualities and actions and consequent realization of God Who is an embodiment of Supreme Knowledge and Bliss and is Blessedness personified, constitute the highest blessing. It is variously termed as Mukti (emancipation), attainment of the Highest Pedestal of Glory (परमपदप्राप्ति), attainment of Eternal Peace (निर्वाणपदप्राप्ति) and liberation (मोक्ष). Every human being is eligible for this state of perfection. The Lord has made the following reassuring proclamation in the *Bhagavadgītā*—

मां हि पार्थ व्यपश्चित्य येऽपि स्युः पापयोनयः ।
स्त्रियो वैश्यास्तथा शूद्रास्तेऽपि यान्ति परां गतिम् ॥

(IX. 32)

“Arjuna, womanfolk, Vaiśyas (members of the trading class), Śudras (those belonging to the labouring class), and even those that are born of the womb of sin (such as the pariah), taking refuge in Me, they too, attain the supreme goal.”

Hence he alone realizes the goal of human existence who is freed from the round of birth and death by practising devotion to God and meditating on Him; and attains the highest abode of God.

A number of misguided statements are made with regard to salvation, of which the following three are more remarkable—

- (1) That, it is not possible to attain salvation in the present age and on this globe and that, householders and low-born classes are not eligible for liberation;
- (2) That, liberated souls are reborn into this world after enjoying beatitude for a considerable length of time;

(3) That liberation is an offspring of enlightenment (ज्ञान). One can be liberated during his lifetime after such wisdom has dawned on him, even though his mind may continue to be swayed by passions such as lust, anger and vices like mendacity, thievish intent and an inclination to practise adultery. The aforesaid evil tendencies are essential properties of the mind and they must inevitably persist so long as the mind is there, as a result of the force of past actions that have begun to fructify.

All these theories are neither correct nor beneficial and reasonable. On the contrary, they are very harmful and give rise to misconceptions. Hence we shall discuss these points seriatim.

(1) Mukti (liberation) is brought about by Self-realization (आत्मज्ञान) and the Vedas and other scriptures have prescribed various methods for attaining it, such as Disinterested Action (निष्काम कर्मयोग), Meditation (ध्यानयोग) and Knowledge of Self (ज्ञानयोग), etc., which can be easily practised at all times and in all climes.

Attainment of liberation has not been restricted to a particular age, clime, caste or order, Mukti can be attained at all times and in all climes and is open to all classes and orders, provided one is endowed with certain equipments (साधनसम्पन्न). The above-quoted verse of *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* also corroborates this statement. Nowhere in the Śrutis or Smṛtis has the Kali Age or this land of ours or any particular caste or order been declared as debarred from Mukti. The lives of saints and holy men that have flourished upto the recent times also prove that Mukti can be attained with necessary efforts by aspirants belonging to every land, age, class and order. We read in the *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa*—

Once upon a time there was a great controversy among

the Ṛsis or seers of old as to the period when even a little practice of virtue would bring forth immense wholesome results. At last they all approached the sage Vedavyāsa in a body for obtaining a categorical reply to this question. The sage was at that time having his ablution in the sacred river Bhāgīrathī (Gangā) and the other sages waited for him under the shade of trees on the bank of the river. Shortly afterwards the sage came out of water and made the following utterances within the hearing of the seers—"The Kali Age is truly blessed. O Śūdras, you are blessed indeed. Women, you are the most blessed of all, there is no one more blessed than you." The sages were greatly astonished to hear this and they out of curiosity enquired of Vyāsadeva the meaning of this strange utterance. The sage replied that this was in reply to the question which had been engaging their minds at that moment. Mukti can be attained with very little exertion in the Kali Age as well as by Śūdras and the womanfolk. In other ages and among other classes and men, very little is accomplished through great efforts, whereas—

स्वल्पेन हि प्रयत्नेन धर्मः सिद्ध्यति वै कलौ।
 नैररात्मगुणाभ्योभिः क्षालिताखिलकिल्बषैः ॥
 शूद्रैश्च द्विजशुश्रूषातत्परैर्मुनिसत्तमाः ।
 तथा स्त्रीभिरनायासात् पतिशुश्रूषयैव हि ॥
 ततस्त्रितयमप्येतन्मम धन्यतमं मतम् ।

(Viṣṇu-Purāṇa VI.II.34—36)

"O sages, in this Kali Age one is absolved of all sins with a little effort only by resorting to good behaviour and attain the object of Dharma. A Śūdra can easily attain the highest state by merely serving the three twice-born classes (Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas and Vaiśyas), and women by serving their husbands. Hence I look upon all these three as the most blessed."

Thus it is proved that in the present age and for women and Śūdras the path of salvation is easier still.

Even if it be granted for a moment that Mukti cannot be attained in the present age and is not within the reach of every class and order and that those who are zealously striving for Mukti are under a delusion, one cannot persuade himself to believe that the delusion under which they are labouring is in any way harmful to them. Even if they do not succeed in securing liberation their efforts are sure to be rewarded with good results. They will at least have their Sattva element increased and their heart purified and their divine virtues unfolded. If Mukti is impossible of achievement, it will come neither to one who strives for it nor to him who makes no effort to attain it; but the former will have his noble qualities developed through practice whereas the one who makes no effort will remain where he is. If, on the other hand, it were possible for everyone to secure liberation even in the present age, the one who strives for it will get it, whereas, the one who makes no endeavour to attain it will be shut out of it. How will he be able to attain liberation when he does not strive for it. Thus he will be debarred from this supreme gain through a misconception and will be repeatedly thrown into the whirlpool of birth and death. Hence according to this argument as well, it is but reasonable, profitable and logical to believe that Mukti can be easily attained at every time and in every clime and is open to every class and order.

(2) Nowhere in the Śrutis, Smṛtis, Upaniṣads and other scriptures do we find a statement supporting the theory that even liberated souls return to this world. Only those noble souls who perform meritorious deeds with some object in view and attain heavenly bliss by virtue of their meritorious deeds return to this mortal world. The Lord has said—

ब्रैविद्या मां सोमपाः पूतपापा
 यज्ञेरिष्ट्वा स्वर्गतिं प्रार्थयन्ते ।
 ते पुण्यमासाद्य सुरेन्द्रलोक-
 मशनन्ति दिव्यान्दिवि देवभोगान् ॥
 ते तं भुक्त्वा स्वर्गलोकं विशालं
 क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।
 एवं त्रयीधर्ममनुप्रपन्ना
 गतागतं कामकामा लभन्ते ॥

(Gītā IX. 20-21)

“Those who perform action with some interested motive as laid down in the three Vedas and drink the sap of Soma plant, and have thus been purged of sin, worshipping Me through sacrifices, seek access to heaven; attaining Indra’s paradise as the result of their good deeds, they enjoy the celestial pleasures in heaven.

“Having enjoyed the extensive heaven-world, they return to this world of mortals on the stock of their merits being exhausted. Thus taking recourse to action with interested motive enjoyed by the three Vedas (as the means of attaining heavenly bliss), and seeking worldly enjoyments, they repeatedly come and go (i.e., ascend heaven by virtue of their meritorious deeds and return to earth when their fruit has been enjoyed).”

There are numerous evidences in the Śrutis and Smṛtis to show that liberated souls do not return to this world. The Lord has said in the Gītā—

आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन ।
 मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पुनर्जन्म न विद्यते ॥

(VIII.16)

“Arjuna, all the world from Brahmaloka (the abode of Brahmā) downwards are subject to appearance and disappearance. But, O son of Kuntī on attaining Me there is no rebirth. (For I am beyond Time and regions like

Brahmaloka, being subject to time, are impermanent.)”

The following Śrutis are also very well-known—

“न स पुनरावर्तते, न स पुनरावर्तते।”

“तेषामिह न पुनरावृत्तिः ॥”

The above scriptural texts clearly prove that liberated souls never return to this world.

All sorts of actions appear as being duly performed by liberated souls in the eyes of the world; but in reality they have nothing to do with those actions—

यस्य सर्वे समारभ्याः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।

ज्ञानाग्निदग्धकर्मणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥

(Gītā VI. 21)

यस्य नाहंकृतो भावो बुद्धिर्यस्य न लिप्यते ।

हत्वापि स इमाँल्लोकान् हन्ति न निबध्यते ॥

(Gītā XVIII. 17)

“He whose undertakings are all free from desire and thoughts of the world, and whose actions are burnt up by the fire of wisdom, him even the wise call a sage.”

“He whose mind is free from the notion of doership and whose reason is not affected by worldly objects and worldly activities, even though he may kill all these people, he does not kill nor is he bound (by sin).”

Moreover, nothing remains in the eyes of that liberated soul besides one pure Divine Substance which is a mass of Intelligence and Bliss—

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानवान्मां प्रपद्यते ।

वासुदेवः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥

(Gītā VII. 19)

“In the very last of all births, the man of realization worships Me, realizing that all this is God. Such a great soul is very rare.”

He believes that everything is Vāsudeva. Hence he is called Mukta (liberated). Such a person never comes in

contact with this illusory world again; for in his eyes the world no longer exists. How can he, under such circumstances, return to this world ?

Should anyone urge that if liberated souls do not return to this world, a time will come when all the creatures of the world will be liberated, with the result that there will be a complete cessation of the universe once for all. In reply to this we say that in the first place this is not possible; for the *Bhagavadgītā* says—

मनुष्याणां सहस्रेषु कश्चिद्यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥

(VII.3)

“Of thousands of men some rare soul strives to realize Me; of those striving Yogīs, again, some rare one (devoting himself exclusively to Me) knows Me in reality.”

“Under such circumstances it is impossible for all living beings to be emancipated; for they are countless in number. Nevertheless, if a day ever comes when all living beings of the entire universe may get liberated, where lies the harm? A number of exalted souls have striven for this end in ancient times. Saints are still exerting themselves to accomplish this and will continue their efforts in future as well. Should their endeavours come out successful at any time and the totality of living beings inhabiting the universe be liberated, there can be nothing like it. There is nothing in our doctrines to preclude such a possibility..

Even if we grant for argument’s sake that even liberated souls have to return to this world and that those who believe otherwise are in the wrong, no harm can come to those who entertain such an erroneous belief; for, according to the above doctrine those who believe that liberated souls return to this world as well as those who do not believe like that, both will have to come back to this world. The result will be the same

for both. If, however, the theory that liberated souls do not return turns out to be correct, he who believes otherwise will be a great loser, since he will be shut out from that salvation which is immune from rebirth. The poor fellow will, as a result of his erroneous belief, be debarred from this highest gain while those who hold the contrary belief will be emancipated. “From this consideration as well, it is reasonable, profitable and best to believe that liberated souls do not return to this world.

None of the authoritative scriptures such as the Śrutis, Smṛtis, Upaniṣads etc., establish that one can attain liberation during one’s lifetime even though his mind may continue to be swayed by passions such as lust, anger etc., Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā has in unequivocal terms declared lust, anger and avarice to be the triple gate of hell—

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः ।
कामः क्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतत्रयं त्यजेत् ॥

(XVI.21)

The dialogue between Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna in the *Bhagavadgītā* makes it clear that “desire” is the seed of all sins and that an aspirant can attain liberation only by destroying it by means of spiritual knowledge. Verses 36 to 43 of Chapter III of the *Bhagavadgītā* treat of this subject in detail. How can one attain liberation so long as he is not freed from passions like lust and anger, joy and sorrow. A liberated soul will have really nothing to do with this world. The *Gītā* says—

यस्त्वात्मरतिरेव स्यादात्मतृप्तश्च मानवः ।
आत्मन्येव च संतुष्टस्तस्य कार्यं न विद्यते ॥
नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन ।
न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रयः ॥

(III. 17-18)

“He, however, who takes delight in the Self alone and is gratified with Self, and is contented in the Self, has no duty.

In this world that great soul has no use whatsoever for things done, nor for things not done— nor has he selfish dependence of any kind on any creature.”

The mind of a liberated soul is completely rid of all impurities and unsteadiness and stripped of the veil of ignorance and becomes pure. How can under such circumstances passions like lust and anger, joy and sorrow persist in him? The Lord has said—

लभ्नते ब्रह्मनिर्वाणमृषयः क्षीणकल्पषाः ।
छिन्दद्वैधा यतात्मानः सर्वभूतहिते रताः ॥
कामक्रोधविद्युक्तानां यतीनां यतचेतसाम् ।
अभितो ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं वर्तते विदितात्मनाम् ॥

(Gītā V.25-26)

“The seers whose sins have been washed away, whose doubts have been dispelled by Knowledge, whose mind is firmly established in God and who are actively engaged in promoting the welfare of all beings, attain Brahma, who is all Peace.

To those wise men, who are free from lust and anger, who have subdued their mind and have realized God, Brahma, the abode of eternal peace, is present all round.”

Śruti texts ‘हर्षशोकौ जहाति’ (He sheds joy and sorrow) ‘तरति शोकमात्मवित्’ (one who has realized his Self overcomes grief) and so on are also well-known in this connection. The Śāstras are unanimous on this point. God-realization eradicates attachment (आसक्ति), which is the very root of all passions; how can under such circumstances passions which are the outcome of attachment persist ? These scriptural texts prove that it is never reasonable to believe that passions linger even in the pure heart of a liberated soul.

If it is believed that traces of passions such as lust and anger linger even after one has attained liberation during his lifetime and that those who do not believe like that are

erroneously engaged in eradicating them, it should be considered whether such a wrong belief leads to any harm. If we consider this question dispassionately, we would arrive at the conclusion that those who strive to eradicate lust, anger etc., are wiser than those who do not engage in such efforts; for those who strive for it will succeed in having greater control over them and thus they will be classed as superior in the rank of Jīvanmuktas. Suppose a man is very much given to lust and anger while another is altogether free from them and both of them are Jīvanmuktas according to the theory enunciated above. Under such circumstances it is natural that the Jīvanmukta who is free from lust, anger etc., is more adorable than the one who is given to lust and anger. Even from this point of view it is advisable to eradicate lust, anger etc. And if it be true that no trace of a passion is left in the mind of a Jīvanmukta, the one who believes otherwise will not only be shut out from liberation but he will be a great loser in other ways; for (according to *Gitā* XVIII, 22) he will wrongly believe himself to be a Jñānī (enlightened soul) and Mukta (liberated) and will be debarred from the sacred work of mending his character and entangled in the delusive web of lust, anger etc., will be repeatedly thrown into the whirlpool of birth and death, suffering hellish tortures of various kind (*vide* verses from 16 to 20 of Chapter XVI of the *Gitā*). Hence one should recognize it as the supreme doctrine that in the mind of a Jīvanmukta passions such as lust and anger, joy and sorrow do not persist. People raise many more kinds of doubts about Mukti; but considerations of space do not allow us to discuss the question any further.

The above exposition should have enabled the reader to understand that a liberated soul is altogether free from the three Gunas or qualities (*vide Gitā* Chapter XIV verses 19, 22—25).

Hence no passion or seed of action lingers in his mind and hence he is not reborn (in this world). It is attachment to the qualities that is responsible for rebirth. The Lord says—

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुद्वक्ते प्रकृतिजानुणान्।
कारणं गुणसंगोऽस्य सदसद्योनिजन्मसु॥

(Gītā XIII. 21)

The readers must have also understood that Mukti is not something impossible to achieve in the present age. Hence we should wake up soon and apply ourselves to our duty. We have up till now wasted most of our precious time in sloth and inertia and should be wide awake now. One should not waste a single moment of his life. Time lost cannot be retrieved in any way. Hence one should chalk out the path of salvation for himself by means of association with holy men and tread it in right earnest. This is the philosophy of beatitude!

उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।

“Awake ! Arise ! and approaching eminent sages seek instruction from them.”

God-realization through Practice of Renunciation

त्यक्त्वा कर्मफलासंगं नित्यतृप्तो निराश्रयः ।
कर्मण्यभिप्रवृत्तोऽपि नैव किंचित्करोति सः ॥
न हि देहभूता शक्यं त्यक्तुं कर्मण्यशेषतः ।
यस्तु कर्मफलत्यागी स त्यागीत्यभिधीयते ॥

Living even the life of a householder, man can realize God through the practice of renunciation. Indeed, ‘renunciation’ is the principal means for attaining God. Therefore, dividing them into seven classes, the marks of renunciation are being briefly enunciated below.

(1) Total Renunciation of Prohibited Acts

This is non-performance, in any way whatsoever, through mind, speech and the body, low acts prohibited by the scriptures, such as theft, adultery, falsehood, deception, fraud, oppression, violence, taking of interdicted food and wrong-doing, etc.

(2) Renunciation of Acts Performed for the Satisfaction of Worldly Desires

This is refraining from sacrifices, charities, austerities, worship and other desire-born actions, with a selfish motive,*

* If under the pressure of circumstances, one is compelled to do an act sanctioned by tradition and the scriptures, which is by nature rooted in desire, but non-performance of which causes pain to anybody or adversely affects the traditional ways of Action and Worship, performing it disinterestedly, and only for general good, is not an act for the satisfaction of desire.

for gaining objects of enjoyments, e.g., wife, progeny and wealth etc., or with the object of curing diseases and terminating other forms of suffering. This is the second type of renunciation.

(3) Total Renunciation of worldly Thirst

Honour, fame, social prestige, wife, progeny, wealth, and whatever other transient object are automatically gained by the force of Prārabdha (Karma which has begun to bear fruit), the desire for their increase should be regarded as an obstacle in God-realization, and renounced. This is the third type of renunciation.

(4) Renunciation of the Habit of Extracting Service from others with a Selfish Motive

Asking for money, or demanding service from another for personal gratification, and acceptance of articles and service given without one's asking for the same, or entertaining any desire in the mind for getting by any means, one's self-interest served by another—all these and similar ideas of getting service from another for the satisfaction of self should be renounced.* This is the fourth type of renunciation.

* If non-acceptance of physical service from another, or offer of eatables by another, where one is entitled to accept such service or offer, causes pain to anyone, or in any way disturbs the social order, acceptance of service, abandoning selfishness, and only for the pleasure of the offerer of service, is not harmful. For non-acceptance of service done by one's wife, son or servant or of eatables offered by friends and relatives, is likely to cause them pain and may prove harmful so far as propriety of social conduct is concerned.

(5) Total Renunciation of Indolence and Desire for Fruit in the Performance of Duties

Whatever duties there are, e.g., cultivation of devotion to God, worship of the celestials, service of the parents and other elders, performance of sacrifices, charities and austerities, maintenance of the household through the earning of livelihood by means of works assigned according to the Varnāśrama system and taking of food and drink etc., for the maintenance of the body—in the performance of these indolence and every form of desire should be renounced.

(A) Renunciation of Indolence in the Practice of Devotion to God

Regarding it as the supreme duty of one's life, one should hear, reflect on, read and discourse on the sublime stories of the virtue, glory and Love of God, who is extremely compassionate, friend of all, the best of Lovers, the Knower of the heart, and renouncing idleness practise constant Japa, together with meditation of His extremely hallowed Name.

(B) Renunciation of Desire in the Practice of Devotion to God

Regarding all enjoyments of this world and the next as transient and perishable and hindrances in the path of Devotion to God, no prayer should be offered to God for obtaining any object whatsoever, nor should any desire be entertained in the mind for the same. Also, prayer should not be offered to God for the removal of any trouble even when one is overtaken by it, in other words the thought should be cultivated in the mind that to sacrifice life is preferable to bringing stain on the purity of Bhakti for the sake of this false existence. For

instance, Prahlāda, even though intensely persecuted by his father; never offered any prayer to God for the removal of his distress.

Curses with harsh expressions, such as "Let the chastisement of God be on you," etc., should not be pronounced even against the persecutor or one who does any injury, and no thought of counter-injury should be entertained against him.

Out of pride of attainment in the path of Devotion, benedictions should not be pronounced in words, such as "May God restore you to health," "May God remove your distress," "May God grant you a long life," etc.

In correspondence also, words of worldly interest should not be used. In Mārwārī society, there is a general custom of writing such words of worldly import in the form of prayer to God for obtaining worldly objects, e.g. "God is our helper here and elsewhere." "God will advance our sales," "God will bring a good monsoon," "God will remove the ailment" etc. Instead of this , auspicious, disinterested words, such as "God in His state of Bliss exists everywhere," "Performance of Bhajana is the only essential duty," etc., should be employed and other than these no word of worldly interest should be written or uttered.

(C) Renunciation of Indolence and Desire in Connection with the Worship of Celestials

There is God's injunction to offer worship to the celestials, who are worthy of being worshipped during the time appointed for such worship, according to the scriptures as well as tradition. Regarding the carrying out of God's behest as one's supreme duty, such worship should be offered to a celestial with enthusiasm, according to the prescribed rules, without expression of any desire for the satisfaction of any worldly interest.

With the object of such worship, words implying worldly interest should not be written on the cash-book, and other account books. For instance in Mārwārī society it is customary on the New Year or Dewali day, subsequent to the worship of Goddess Lakṣmī, to write many words implying worldly desire, such as "Goddess Lakṣmī will bring profit," "The store will be kept full," "Prosperity and success will be brought," "Under the protection of Goddess Kālī" "Under the protection of Goddess Gaṅgā," etc. These should be substituted by unselfish, auspicious words, such as, "Śrī Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa in the form of Bliss, is present everywhere," or "Goddess Lakṣmī has been worshipped with great delight and enthusiasm." Similarly, while making entries on the daily cash-book, this procedure should be followed.

(D) Renunciation of Indolence and Desire in the Service of Parents and other Elders

It is man's supreme duty to render daily services, in all possible ways to parents, the preceptor and other persons who are one's superiors in Varna, Āśrama, Age, Qualifications, or in whatever other respect it may be, and daily offer them obeisances. Cultivating this thought in the mind, and abandoning all idleness, disinterested and enthusiastic services should be rendered to them, according to God's behests.

(E) Renunciation of Indolence and Desire in the Performance of Sacrifices, Charities, Austerities and other Auspicious Deeds

Sacrifices, e.g., the daily obligatory five Great Sacrifices,*

* The five Great Sacrifices are as follows— (1) Sacrifice to gods (performance of Agnihotra etc.); (2) Sacrifice to Ṛsis (study of the Vedas, performance of Sandhyā and Japa of Gāyatrī etc.); (3) Sacrifice to the Manes (performance of Tarpana, Śrāddha etc.); (4) Sacrifice to men (entertainment of guests); (5) Sacrifice to all created beings (performance of Balivaiśwadeva).

and other occasional sacrifices, should be performed. Through gifts of food, clothing, learning, medicine and wealth etc., attempt should be made, according to one's capacity, to make all creatures happy, through mind, speech and the body. Similarly, all forms of bodily suffering should be undergone for the preservation of Dharma. These duties enjoined by the scriptures should be performed with faith and enthusiasm, according to God's behests, regarding them as supremely important, wholly renouncing the desire for all kinds of enjoyment of this world and the next.

(F) Renunciation of Indolence and Desire in the Performance of Proper Works for the Maintenance of one's Family through Earning of Livelihood

It is God's injunction that the family should be maintained through service to the world by performing duties laid down in the scriptures for the respective Varnas and Āśramas, even as agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade have been laid down as the means of livelihood for the Vaiśya. Therefore, regarding them as duties, treating profit and loss as equal, and renouncing all forms of desire, such works should be enthusiastically performed.*

* Works performed by a person in the above spirit, being free from greed, cannot be tainted by evil in any way, for in works of livelihood greed is the principal cause which leads one to the commission of sin. Therefore, men should renounce all forms of evil connected with their respective duties as laid down by the Varnāśrama system, and perform all their duties for God's sake, disinterestedly, regarding them as injunction of God.

(G) Renunciation of Indolence and Desire in Works for the Preservation of the Body

In works undertaken for the preservation of the body, according to the scriptures, e.g., partaking of food, medicines, etc., the desire for enjoyment should be renounced. They should be performed, according to the needs of the occasion, only with the object of God-realization, regarding pleasure and pain, profit and loss, life and death as equal.

Together with the four types of renunciation stated above, when according to the fifth type of renunciation, all evils and all forms of desire are destroyed, and there remains the one strong desire for God-realization, it should be regarded as the mark of the person who has attained ripeness in the first stage of wisdom.

(6) Total Renunciation of the sense of Meum and Attachment with regard to all Worldly Objects and Activities

All worldly objects like wealth, house, clothes etc., all relations like the wife, child, friends etc., and all forms of enjoyment of this world and the next like honour, fame, prestige etc., being transient and perishable and regarding them as impermanent, the sense of meum and attachment with regard to them should be renounced. Similarly, having developed pure, exclusive Love for God alone, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, all sense of meum and attachment should be renounced for all works done through the mind, speech and body, and even for the body itself. This is sixth type of renunciation.*

* The renunciation of thirst for all objects, and the renunciation of desire for the fruit of all activities have been described above as the third and fifth type of renunciation, but even after such renunciation the sense of meum and attachment for them are left as residues; just as even though Bharata Muni through practices of Bhajana and meditation and association with holy men, had renounced all thirst for worldly objects and desire for the fruit of the activities, his sense of meum in respect of the deer and attachment to the duty of protecting of the deer lingered. That is why renunciation of the sense of meum and attachment for all objects and activities has been described as the sixth type of renunciation.

Men who reach the stage of this sixth form of renunciation, developing dispassion for all things of the world, attain exclusive Love for God alone, the supreme embodiment of Love. Therefore, retiring to a solitary place, they like only to hear and relate the stories of God's spotless Love, which reveal the virtues, glory, and mysteries of God, and reflect on the same, and practise Bhajana, meditation and study of the scriptures. They develop an abhorrence for wasting even a moment of their valuable time in the company of man attached to the world and indulging in fun, luxury, wrong-doing, backbiting, enjoyments and idle gossip. They perform all their duties reflecting on God's Form and Name, only for God's sake, and without any worldly attachment.

(7) Total Renunciation of Subtle Desire and Egoism with regard to the World, the Body and all Actions

All objects of the world being projections of Māyā, are wholly transient, and God alone, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, is equally present everywhere—this idea having been firmly established, all subtle desires for the objects of the world, including the body, and for every form of activity have to be totally renounced. In other words, there should be no thought of them left in the mind in the form of impressions. And due to total lack of identification with the body, there should be no trace of any sense of doership with regard to actions done through the mind, speech and body. This is the seventh type of renunciation.*

* Even when there is total negation of thirst, of the desire for fruit, of the sense of meum and attachment with regard to all objects of the world and all forms of activity, desire in its subtle form and the feeling of doership persist. That is why, renunciation of subtle desire and egoism has been described as the seventh type of renunciation.

The thoughts of persons, who attain Supreme Dispassion* in the form of this seventh type of renunciation, get totally withdrawn from all objects of the world, if at any time any worldly thought makes its appearance, it does not leave any impression on the mind, for they always remain firmly established in God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss.

Therefore, his mind being freed from all vices, virtues like Ahimsā,¹ Truth,² Non-Stealing,³ Continence,⁴ Abstaining from vilification,⁵ Modesty-Absence of pride,⁶ Artlessness⁷, Purity,⁸ Contentment,⁹ Endurance,¹⁰ Love for the company of holy men. Spirit of Service, Inclination to perform Sacrifices, Charity, Austerity,¹¹ Love for Scriptures,¹² Mind control,

* In the person who has reached the sixth stage of renunciation stated above there may be now and then, some slight manifestation of attachment when his contact with objects of enjoyment increases; but in the person who has reached the seventh stage of renunciation there can be no attachment, even when there is contact with objects of enjoyment; for in his conception, there is negation of any other object than God— That is why this renunciation has been called Supreme Dispassion.

1. Non-infliction of suffering on any creature through mind, speech or body.
2. Statement of facts in sweet words, representing exactly what is realized by the mind and the senses.
3. Total abstinence from theft.
4. Refraining from the eight forms of sexual enjoyment.
5. Not to make any damaging statement against anybody.
6. Not to seek honour, attention or homage, etc.
7. Not to be showy or pretentious.
8. Both external and internal purity. (Truthful and honest dealing lends purity to wealth; food-stuffs obtained by that wealth impart purity to food; proper behaviour lends purity of conduct; purification of the body through use of water, earth etc., is called external purity. Through eradication of impurities like partiality, prejudice and crookedness etc., when the mind becomes transparent and pure, it is called internal purity.)
9. Want of thirst for worldly things.
10. Bearing contradictory experiences like heat and cold, pleasure and pain, etc.
11. Enduring hardships for the practice of one's own Dharma.
12. Study of the Vedas and other elevating scriptures and chanting of God's Names and glories.

Sense-control, Humility, Straightness,¹³ Compassion, Faith,¹⁴ Discrimination,¹⁵ Dispassion,¹⁶ Love for seclusion, Refraining from accumulation of objects,¹⁷ Absence of doubt and distraction, Cessation of Desires, Personal Magnetism,¹⁸ Forgiveness,¹⁹ Fortitude,²⁰ Absence of malice,²¹ Fearlessness,²² Absence of egoism, Quietude,²³ Exclusive Devotion to God etc., naturally make their appearance.

Thus through total absence of desire and egoism in regard to all objects, including the body, and all actions, constant union through identity with God is the mark of the person who has attained ripeness in the third stage of wisdom.

Some of the virtues mentioned above, appear in the first and second stage, but all the virtues make their appearance generally in the third stage. For these are the marks of persons who have reached very near to God-realization, and are the means of attainment of

13. This means straightness of the body and mind, as well as of the sense.

14. Faith, as strong as in things directly perceived in the Vedas, other scriptures and in the utterances of saints, the preceptor and God.

15. Real knowledge about what is true and what is false.

16. Total absence of attachment for anything belonging to any region upto Brahmaloka.

17. Refraining from accumulation of wealth with the sense of meum.

18. It is that power of superior souls under the influence of which even wicked, worldly-minded men generally abstain from sinful conduct and engage themselves in virtuous deeds according to their behests.

19. Disinclination to inflict any form of punishment on one who does injury.

20. Not to get upset even in the face of the greatest calamity.

21. Not to bear malice even against one who is maliciously disposed.

22. Total absence of fear.

23. Total absence of desires and cravings and habitual cheerfulness of mind.

direct Knowledge of God. That is why in Chapter XIII of the *Gitā* (verses 7 to 11) Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa enumerated most of these virtues as Knowledge and in Chapter XVI (verses 1 to 3) mentions them as the divine qualities.

Moreover the scriptural authorities regard these virtues as the common Dharma of humanity. All men are qualified to attain them. Therefore, depending on God all should make special efforts to develop the above virtues in their mind.

Conclusion

In this article it has been said that God may be realized through seven types of renunciation. Among them, it has been pointed out, the first five types of renunciation indicate the first stage of wisdom, those upto the sixth type indicate the marks of the second stage of wisdom, and renunciation upto the seventh type indicate the marks of the third stage of wisdom. He who attains ripeness in the third stage of wisdom indicated above immediately realizes God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. Thereafter he ceases to have any connection with this transient, perishable and impermanent world. Just as the person awakened from a dream ceases to have any connection with the dream-world, even so the person awakened from the dream of ignorance ceases to have any connection with the impermanent world, the creation of Māyā. Though from the point of view of the world all forms of activities are observed as taking place through the body of that person under the force of Prārabdha, and the world gains a lot by such activities, (for being freed from desires, attachment and the sense of doership, whatever the

Mahātmā does through his mind, speech and body is accepted as the standard of right conduct in the world, and from the ideas of such a Mahātmā scriptures are formed) yet that person who has realized God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss lives wholly beyond Māyā, consisting of the three Guṇas. Therefore, he during illumination, activity and sleep etc., which are the effects of the Guṇas, does not abhor them nor, when they cease, desires for them. For he views pleasure and pain, gain and loss, honour and ignominy, praise and blame etc., as also earth, stone and gold etc., alike. Therefore, that Mahātmā does not feel delighted on obtaining a desirable object or on the removal of what is undesirable nor does he grieve when obtaining an undesirable object or over the loss of what is desirable. If for any reason, his body is cut with a weapon, or he is faced with any other form of extreme suffering, that man of wisdom, established exclusively in God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, is not shaken from that state. For, to his mind, the whole world appears as a mirage, and nothing exists beyond the one God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss. What more can we say about him, the mental state of that soul who has realized God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, is in reality known to him alone. None can reveal it through mind, intellect or the senses. Therefore, waking as soon as possible from the sleep of ignorance, and surrendering oneself at the feet of a saint and abiding by his instructions, one should earnestly take to some spiritual discipline for realizing God through the seven types of renunciation stated above. For, this extremely rare gift of a human life is attained only through the grace of God, at the end of

many births. Therefore, the invaluable time allotted to this life should not be wasted in indulging in the perishable, transient, impermanent enjoyments of this world.

The Unmanifest and Manifest Divinity

Beyond the one Eternal Existence which is untainted by Māyā whatever meets the eye is unreal and imaginary like an object seen in a dream. This is the highest teaching of the Vedas, the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta philosophy. This, again, the theory propounded by Śaṅkara; nay, this is the only doctrine that stands the test of reason. But the truth is so sublime and esoteric that it is not advisable to lay it open to all and sundry in the natural course at once. There are very few people who can talk and hear of it. He alone is entitled to speak on the subject who has realized this truth and lives upto it, and he alone is eligible for being initiated into it who is ripe for its realization and realizes it the moment it is communicated to him. Those who do not belong to this category are neither allowed to talk of it nor to hear it talked of. Nay, this sort of teaching can even have an adverse effect on those who have likes and dislikes, who rejoice in earthly gains and are upset by losses, who experience joy and sorrow as distinct from each other and who have a zest for worldly enjoyments and are given to the gratification of their senses. They are led into the erroneous belief that , the world itself being a mere dream, sins like mendacity, adultery, violence, fraudulence and chicanery etc., are also unreal, so that no harm can come to a man whatever he may do. Armed with this belief they give up virtuous actions which are difficult to perform and require some effort, whereas it is much easier to give up such actions and to indulge in sinful deeds. Hence it is prohibited in the Śāstras to preach this doctrine to those who are unqualified. For, the latter are unable to grasp this

teaching in its true spirit, and abandon virtuous actions, while they cannot obtain illumination and are thus losers in both ways. The following Hindi couplet is often quoted in this connection and is very significant—

ब्रह्मग्यान उपन्थो नहीं, कर्म दिये छिटकाय।

तुलसी ऐसी आतमा, सहज नरकमें जाय॥

“One who has not obtained enlightenment and has abandoned his legitimate duties paves his way to hell.”

न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसंगिनाम्।

जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन्॥

(III. 26)

“A wise man established in Me should not unsettle the mind of the ignorant attached to action, but should get them to perform all their duties, duly performing them himself.”

The only difference between the actions of a wise and those of an ignorant person is that those of the former are naturally free from attachment while those of the latter are performed with attachment. The *Gitā* says—

सक्ताः कर्मण्यविद्वांसो यथा कुर्वन्ति भारत।

कुर्याद्विद्वांस्तथासक्तश्चकीर्षुलोकसंग्रहम् ॥

(III. 25)

“Arjuna, as the unwise act with attachment, so should the wise man, seeking maintenance of the world order, act without attachment.”

The long and short of it is that one should not talk of Brahma untainted by *Māyā* before unqualified persons.

It may be urged here that when there is nothing beyond the one Eternal Existence untainted by *Māyā* the existence of the universe as also of its Creator is out of the question. And if this is the case, what will happen to the scriptures that treat of these subjects and the creation as it appears to us ? Our reply to this is that, to take a familiar instance, the sky is devoid of form but sometimes a strip of cloud makes

its appearance therein. Now, such strips of cloud spring up in the sky; appear in the sky as well as melt away in the sky; but all these changes make no difference in the substance of the sky. The part of the sky which is covered by clouds, however, assumes a distinctive shape and is the seat of phenomena like rain, etc.

Similarly, that aspect of the one Eternal, Pure and Infinite Existence which appears to be screened by Māyā is known as Qualified or Personal God. In fact, this Qualified or personal God is not something different from the Impersonal Divinity, although He is regarded as different simply because of His contact with Māyā which makes Him appear as such. This Personal or Qualified aspect of Consciousness, which appears as different from the Impersonal aspect, is the Creator of the universe. He is also known by other names such as Ādipuruṣa (the Primal Being), Puruṣottama (the Supreme Being and Māyāviśiṣṭa Īśwara (God qualified by Māyā). The universe which appears as subsisting in this Qualified aspect of Consciousness as clouds in a fraction of the sky, is an effect of Māyā (illusion). Māyā is only another name for the Śakti or power of the Creator. This power of God inheres in Him in the same way as the burning power subsists in fire. This is also known by the name of Prakṛti (Nature) and Ajñāna (Ignorance).

Now, what is this Māyā and how does it come into being ? This is a different topic and will lead us into digression. We would therefore refrain from discussing the question and revert to our original topic. From the foregoing exposition it should have been clear that the formless, all-pervading, infinite consciousness, which has been likened to the sky, is termed as Śuddha Brahma (Divinity untainted by Māyā). In fact, the analogy of the sky, too, is not appropriate and conveys only a partial idea of Brahma. For,

“Arjuna, whenever there is decline of righteousness, and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I body Myself forth.

“For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for establishing Dharma (righteousness) on a firm footing, I am born from age to age.”

At this moment I find no such Incarnation of God who may come forward and say that he has bodied himself forth for the deliverance of righteous men. Virtuous men can be had in a good number, but we find none who has come down to this earth to liberate such virtuous souls. Nor do we find anyone who may proclaim like Śrī Kṛṣṇa—

सर्वधर्मान्यरित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज।
अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः॥

(Gītā XVIII. 66)

“Surrendering all duties to Me, seek refuge in Me alone. I shall absolve you of all sins; grieve not.”

There is nobody in world at present who can undertake to absolve anyone from sins through sheer dependence on him.

A few days ago a certain gentleman approached me, saying that sins had multiplied in the world and asked me whether the time had not yet come for the Lord to body Himself forth and, if the time had arrived, why did He not incarnate Himself? I pleaded ignorance in this matter. As a matter of fact, I do not claim to know anything and everything. The Lord alone knows why He tarries. Of course, if anyone asks me whether I shall be pleased in the event of the Lord incarnating Himself I should say I shall be only too glad if the Lord bodies Himself forth, for in that case even I can obtain His vision. If anyone innocently asks me whether in my opinion the time for the Lord incarnating Himself has come. I can say from surmise that the time has

probably not yet arrived. For, had the time come the Lord would undoubtedly have bodied Himself forth. Things are not yet so bad as they should be in the Kali Age. Atrocities have not yet grown so rampant, and righteousness and righteous men have not yet suffered so much as they did during the time of other incarnations. During the time of Bhagavān Śrī Rāma alone, for instance, so many sages and seers were killed by demons that heaps of their bones had been piled up here and there.

Q.—Were not the ancient Ṛṣis powerful enough to kill the demons ? If they were, why did they not kill the demons?

Ans.—The Ṛṣis did possess the power of killing the Rākṣasas, but they were not willing to expend the spiritual energy which they had acquired and stored up through lifelong practice of religious austerities (तपोबल). When the sage Viśwāmitra approached King Daśaratha and begged him to hand over Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to him, he said to him, “Even though I can kill the Rākṣasas myself, I shall thereby be exhausting the store of spiritual energy that I have accumulated through the practice of austere penances, which I am loath to do. On their death at the hands of Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa the performance of my religious rites will be secured against sacrilegious encroachments, and the store of my spiritual energy remain intact. Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa can easily make short work of the demons; it is I who know this and not you.”

King Daśaratha out of ignorance took Śrī Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa to be ordinary boys, and out of parental affection said to Viśwāmitra, “Your Holiness, I am prepared to accompany you myself and can kill any Rākṣasas excepting Rāvaṇa, of course; I beseech you, therefore, to let Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa alone and take me with you.” Seeing the

Emperor under the clutches of infatuation, the sage Vasiṣṭha who recognized the real greatness of Śrī Rāma intervened and pleaded with the Emperor thus—

“Your Majesty need not be afraid—they are not ordinary boys and no harm can come to them. You may therefore gladly send them with the sage.” This narrative will show that the sages of yore were powerful, no doubt, but they did not want to exercise their power which they had accumulated through austere penances.

The Kali Age has not yet advanced so far as to necessitate the Lord’s incarnating Himself. Moreover, the Lord does not body Himself forth so easily on every occasion. In the first instance, He deputes His accredited representatives, known as Kāraka Puruṣas, investing them with His own authority, just as the proprietor of a firm sends his trusted agent to look after his business. But when he feels that the deputation of a representative would not serve the desired end and that things would not be set right unless he goes in person, he himself proceeds to that place. In the same way, when the Lord feels it necessary to body Himself forth even after He has deputed a representative, He appears personally in our midst. The privileged class known as Kāraka Puruṣas includes those God-attained souls who after casting off their mortal frame are escorted to the higher regions by celestial beings and ultimately reach the region called Satyaloka, according to the process mentioned in the following couplet of Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā—

अग्निर्ज्योतिरहः शुक्लः षण्मासा उत्तरायणम् ।
तत्र प्रयाता गच्छन्ति ब्रह्म ब्रह्मविदो जनाः ॥

(VIII. 24)

Such blessed being as are destined for the Satyaloka are received in advance by the attendants (पार्षद) of the Lord who are also known by the name of (अमानव पुरुष)

(superhuman or angelic beings), who take them to the highest abode of the Lord with great honour. That abode or region, known as Parama Dhāma, does not perish at the time of universal destruction (प्रलय) and is perfectly immune from affliction and sorrow. One who finds his way into this region once, is never reborn in this mortal world with the bonds of Karma or action. Probably it is this region which is designated as Vaikuṇṭha by the devotees of Śrī Viṣṇu, and Goloka by the devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and as Sāketa by the devotees of Śrī Rāma. The holy persons who find their admittance into this place remain there in an ecstatic state until final dissolution (महाप्रलय) and are ultimately merged in Eternity or pure Existence (शुद्ध ब्रह्म). Of these emancipated souls, if anyone comes into this world again at the bidding of the Lord who is the Creator of this universe, or of his own free will simply with a view to work for the welfare of the universe, he is known as a Kāraka Puruṣa (authorised agent or representative). Believing souls can be redeemed merely by seeing them, touching them and thinking of them. Sages like Śrī Vasiṣṭha, Śrī Vedavyāsa and so on belonged to this type of exalted beings. Redemption of mankind is the only motive of their incarnation in this world. We find that the representatives of a ruler sometimes visit the state gaol on some special occasion with the royal commission to release the prisoners confined there and return of their own free will, after carrying out the behests of their ruler. Prisoners as well as state officers visit the gaol, the difference being that whereas prisoners have to go there under compulsion in order to serve the sentences awarded to them for their crimes, the officials go there of their own free will and out of compassion, in order to release the prisoners in bondage. Similarly, the Kāraka

Puruṣas, too, make their appearance in the world simply in order to liberate the souls that are bound by the shackles of Karma. The only difference between an Avatāra and a Kāraka Puruṣa is that the former was never a Jīva (a soul in bondage) whereas a Kāraka Puruṣa was a Jīva before and attained liberation by gradual stage through his own efforts coupled with Divine Grace. An Avatāra or even a Kāraka Puruṣa is not to be found anywhere in this world at the present day; of course, Jīvanmukta saints can be found.

Mukti (Liberation) is of two kinds— Sadyomukti (direct or immediate liberation) and Kramamukti (liberation by gradual stages). Those who are absolutely freed from ignorance in this very life and are merged in the one eternal, true, blissful and intelligent principle, the whole stock of whose actions has been consumed by the fire of wisdom and in whose eyes nothing remains except the one infinite and endless Divine Existence are called Jīvanmuktas (those who are liberated while living) and are said to have attained what is known as Sadyomukti, while those who reach the highest abode of God through different Lokas or regions are known as Kramamukta. This Kramamukti, again, is of four kinds, viz., Sāmīpya, Sārūpya, Sālokya and Sāyujya. Sāmīpya means living in close proximity with the Lord; Sārūpya means being endowed with a form similar to that of the Lord; Sālokya means residing in the same Loka with the Lord and Sāyujya means oneness with or merging in the Lord. Those who have the attitude of a servant or wife towards the Lord and treat Him as their master or husband are blessed with Sāmīpyamukti; those who look upon Him as a friend and treat Him as such are blessed with Sārūpyamukti; those again, who love Him as a child are

blessed with Sālokyamukti and those who think of Him as an enemy or worship Him with devotion mixed with Jñāna (knowledge) are blessed with Sāyujyamukti.

Such exalted souls can be found in the world even today. A Jīvanmukta is one who was a Jīva before and was liberated afterwards through his individual efforts, King Janaka and Śrī Śukadeva are instances of this type.

Among the Jīvas the foremost are those who have been freed from Jīvahood. Next in order are those who have embraced divine virtues and are treading the path of liberation and have very nearly approached their destination. It is very probable that they may be liberated in this very life or they may have to be reborn once again. Such people can be found even now. Like Jīvanmuktas even they are generally not subject to lust and anger, or even to the feelings of joy and sorrow.

Q.—The scriptures tell us that there have been sages and holy men, too, in the past who manifested joy and sorrow. How is this to be accounted for ?

Ans.—Those who are affected by joy and sorrow as resulting from attachment and repulsion cannot be regarded as Jīvanmuktas. But if they occasionally exhibit joy and sorrow by way of duty and in order to preserve a time-honoured practice there can be no objection to their doing so. Lord Śrī Rāma Himself wept bitterly on the abduction of Sītā and on Lakṣmaṇa having been hurt with a Śakti (dart or spear) hurled by Meghanāda and that, too, in such a way as to confound many important personages. But that constituted an ideal behaviour on the part of Śrī Rāma. Moreover, there was one more secret underlying this behaviour. By weeping piteously for Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa he taught the world the lesson of supreme love and tenderness of heart. The Lord has described His nature in the *Bhagavadgītā* as follows—

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तांस्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।

(IV. 11)

"Arjuna, howsoever men approach Me, even so do I seek them."

It was in consonance with this principle that Śrī Rāma accosted even inanimate objects such as trees, boughs and leaves and so on and enquired of them the whereabouts of Sītā and thus proved that just as Sītā who was at that time in the clutches of Rāvaṇa was loudly repeating His name in the ecstasy of love, even so was, He loudly repeating her name with a heart full of love. Similarly, by weeping for Lakṣmaṇa, Śrī Rāma proved that His heart was as sore for Lakṣmaṇa as the latter's could be for Him. From these incidents we should learn that the Lord is prepared to reciprocate our feeling and attitude towards Him. Not to speak of the Lord, even sages and seers can manifest outward signs of joy and sorrow in their worldly behaviour.

So far we have talked of Jīvanmuktas and those who have very nearly approached the stage of liberation. Besides these, there are pious Yogīs who betake themselves to the Lord with an ulterior motive and who are led by various gods, as mentioned in the following couplet of the *Bhagavadgītā*, through the lunar effulgence to paradise, and, having enjoyed the fruit of their noble actions there, return to the mortal world—

धूमो रात्रिस्तथा कृष्णः षण्मासा दक्षिणायनम् ।
तत्र चान्द्रमसं ज्योतिर्योगी प्राप्य निवर्तते ॥

(VIII. 25)

In former times there were Yogīs who had acquired the eightfold accomplishment (अष्टसिद्धि) or at least some of them. The knowledge of this science has now very nearly disappeared. As a matter of fact, mere acquisition of these Siddhis is not conducive of the highest good (निःश्रेयस). One

can derive worldly enjoyments and amenities of life from such Siddhis but not Mokṣa or liberation. That is why, the Śāstras have recognized these Siddhis as mere stumbling-blocks in the path of liberation and instrumental in securing earthly pleasures alone. The Yogīs who acquire Siddhis generally do not go beyond them, whereas the other class of Yogīs who tread the path of liberation acquire Mokṣa which is the highest accomplishment. Hence they rank higher than the former.

Q.—What are the eight Siddhis? How are they acquired and what is their utility ?

Ans.—The eight Siddhis are Anīmā, Garimā, Mahimā Laghimā, Prāpti, Prākāmya, Īśitva and Vaśitva. These are attained by following the eightfold path of Yoga, and their utility is as follows—

- (1) Anīmā consists in making one's body as minute as an atom (अणु) as Śrī Hanumān did while entering the portals of Lankā.
- (2) Garimā consists in increasing the weight of one's body to abnormal limits as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa did during the encounter of Arjuna with Karṇa, when He is said to have brought the chariot along with the horses to the level of the earth under pressure of His body as a device to dodge the deadly dart hurled by Karṇa against Arjuna, for whom He was acting as a charioteer.
- (3) Mahimā consists in swelling the size of one's body at will as Lord Vāmana did while trying to divest the demon king Bali of his kingdom.
- (4) Laghimā consists in making the body exceedingly light.
- (5) Prāpti consists in securing the object of one's desire as the sage Bharadwāja did at the time of entertaining

Bharata who was going to bring his elder brother back to Ayodhyā.

- (6) Prākāmya means infallibility of desire.
- (7) Īśitva consists in acquiring the power of creating the universe, similar to that possessed by God.
- (8) Vaśitva consists in winning over anyone through one's magnetic influence.

These are the eightfold accomplishment. Yogīs possessing these powers are not to be found at the present day. Persons having acquired minor accomplishments (उपसिद्धि), such as infallibility of speech (वचनसिद्धि), which can be acquired by the practice of absolute truthfulness, can be found even now.

Q.—It is a fact that whatever escapes the lips of one who practises absolute truthfulness comes out to be true ?

Ans.—Of course, there are instances of this sort mentioned in the Upaniṣads and the Purāṇas which show that such things were of common occurrence in the days of yore. We read in Śrīmad Bhāgavata how a young hermit boy cursed Emperor Parīksit the grandson of Arjuna, and how the curse came out to be literally true and the snake called Takṣaka bit the Emperor just at the moment predicted by the boy. When king Nahuṣa mentioned in the Purāṇas ascended the throne of Indra (the Ruler of the celestial kingdom) and, blinded with passion, rode on a palanquin carried by holy men to win over the consort of Indra, and in the heat of the moment kicked one of the sages who bore his palanquin, while asking him to proceed apace (शीघ्रं सर्व) the wise man cursed that haughty monarch should be transformed into a serpent (सर्व) and accordingly the king was Instantaneously changed into a serpent, on being supplicated he predicted that in the Dwāpara Age when the snake happened to

catch Bhīma in his coils he would meet Yudhiṣṭhira and be delivered from the effects of the imprecation. This prediction also came to be true. These incidents prove that every word that comes from the lips of a truthful man invariably comes out to be true. Of course, should such a truthful person ever tell a deliberate lie, that would not come true. Yudhiṣṭhira, for example, deliberately stated the fact of Aśvatthāmā's death in a doubtful way; hence the latter did not die. But if one always speaks the truth, there can be no doubt about his words coming true.

We can also find such men in this age as have brought their mind and senses almost completely under control, who are never overcome by lust, who are never tempted to taste the daintiest dishes with which they may be served and who never gives way to anger and sorrow even in the presence of strong causes. But I have not yet had occasion to see a noble soul whose very sight, touch, speech or thought alone may redeem creatures. For instance, the very sight and utterances of the sage Nārada redeemed millions of creatures, the teachings of Śrī Śukadeva saved millions, the very thought of Jīvanmukta Ācāryas succeeded in liberating several of their disciples and the sight, touch and teaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered thousands. Of course I can say this much that one can acquire such efficacy if he likes, as to redeem others by one's very sight, touch, speech and thought.

The Philosophy of Worship

The scriptures as well as the experience of exalted souls prove that the worshippers of both the Manifest and Unmanifest aspects of God can attain salvation. Worshippers of the Manifest aspect can also behold His personal Form, whereas those who worship His Unmanifest aspect are not able to visualize Him, as they do not care to do so. Worship of the Manifest aspect of God comes to fruition speedily when it is accompanied by knowledge of His comprehensive nature. In other words, the worshipper should realize that the God whom he worships is omnipresent and omnipotent. A votary of Śiva or Viṣṇu, for instance, should not conceive his Deity to be present in the image only and nowhere else, such a narrow conception of God partakes of the Tāmasa element and has been deprecated in the *Gitā* (*vide* Chapter XVIII. 22).* This does not mean that one should not practise idol-worship or that one who conceives his God as existing in the Image only and naively worship Him as such without comprehending His true nature should desist from that worship. To engage in worship of any kind, whatsoever, is better than no worship at all. Of course, worship of this latter type; proceeding as it does from a narrow conception of God, bears fruit after a long time. The only disadvantage it has is that it bears fruit after a long time, which is due to the fact that the worshipper belittles his own God by conceiving Him as confined to a particular image only.

If a worshipper of fire who kindles fire for the sake of performing a sacrifice believes that fire is limited to that place alone and does not recognize its presence elsewhere,

* यतु कृत्स्नवदेकस्मिन्कार्ये सकृतमहैतुकम्।
अतात्पर्यवदल्पं च तत्त्वाप्समुदाहतम्॥

he thereby minimizes its all pervasiveness within narrow limits. On the other hand, he who comprehends the real nature of fire knows that it is present everywhere, though in a latent form, which accounts for its invisibility; that it is perceived the moment it is kindled and it can be kindled by ordinary effort. Had it been non-existent elsewhere, how could it be produced anywhere and everywhere? Just as fire, though patent in the sacrificial pit alone, is present everywhere in a latent form, similarly, God as well is equally present everywhere in His Unmanifest form and is visualized by the devotee by dint of his love. It is the Unmanifest which becomes Manifest in a particular place, and the Manifest is present everywhere in an Unmanifest form, the two are really one, or, in other words, they are the two aspects of one and the same entity. One who worships the Manifest aspect of God while recognizing this fundamental unity underlying the two aspects is able to attain this goal speedily. As a matter of fact, God cannot be likened to fire. The analogy of fire has been adopted only by way of illustration; for fire is not omnipresent to the same extent as God. Five omnipresent substances cannot co-exist. Earth, water, fire, air etc., subsist in their respective forms; the main characteristic of earth is odour, while that of fire is colour and so on. God, on the other hand, is omnipresent and the Supreme cause of all causes, and therefore subsists everywhere. An effect can never be comprehensive, the cause alone is comprehensive. Prakṛti (Primordial Matter) is the cause of the universe, while God is the cause of Prakṛti itself. Hence it is called the Supreme Cause (महाकारण). Prakṛti which is inconscient can be the cause of the inconscient universe; it cannot be the cause of God who is a conscious Principle. He alone is the Supreme cause of everything—He alone pervades sentient and insentient being alike at all

times. He does not perish even when all else perishes.* He is eternal and without a beginning.

The Unmanifest aspect of God is characterized as all existence (सत्), all-knowledge (विज्ञान), infinite (अनन्त) and a compact mass of bliss (आनन्दमय). Sat means that which never ceases to be and never undergoes change, that which is immutable and which is always uniform. Vijñāna signifies wisdom, pure conscious and illumination. Ananta implies that which has no limit, no magnitude which can neither be weighed nor measured, which does not admit of extremes, which is the subtlest of the subtle and the hugest of the huge, and which contains the whole universe in one fraction of it. Ānandaghana conveys the idea of Absolute bliss, bliss and bliss alone. Ghana denotes that there is no room in it for anything else than bliss. Just as ice is consolidated water, similarly, God is consolidated bliss. The difference between the two is that while ice has a form and is inconscient and hard, God is formless, conscious and knowledge personified. Such a formless God is present everywhere and fills all space.

The blissful nature of God is beyond description. It is simply ineffable. Have you ever been transported with joy due to some earthly cause? That is nothing when compared to the raptures one enjoys in the company of saints approached with genuine faith, in the remembrance of God or in meditating upon Him, and to which the *Gītā* refers in XVIII, 36-37. Sensual pleasure pales into insignificance before this ecstatic joy. And even this joy is a small drop of that ocean of bliss which is known by the name of Brahma (God); any other joy is not absolute, it is limited and can be adulterated.

All that exists is a projection of God who is all bliss incarnate. The whole universe is contained in God just as

* यः स सर्वेषु भूतेषु नश्यत्सु न विनश्यति।

(*Gītā* VIII. 20)

the reflection is contained in a mirror. Strictly speaking, it is not contained in Him; it is only reflected in Him. Whereas a mirror is inconscient and hard, God is an embodiment of Supreme Bliss and conscious at the same time. He is present everywhere in a compact form and cannot be compared with anything else. His compactness is not analogous to that of stone or ice. These can be penetrated by other substances, but God cannot be penetrated by anything else. The Self ('I') in us is so subtle and compact that it cannot be penetrated by anything foreign. The body, the mind, the intellect and so on can be entered into, but the Self cannot. God in His universal and unmanifest aspect is likewise impenetrable.

His consciousness, too, is of a singular type. Everything that exists in our body is inconscient, and the principle that knows them alone is conscious. That which is knowable is inconscient, objective; it cannot know the Self. Hands and feet, for instance, know not the Self; the Self, however, knows them. It is the Self that knows everything; knowledge is its very essence. That knowledge itself is God who is omnipresent. Every inch of space is occupied by Him. There is no nook or corner which is devoid of Him. That is why the Śruti describes Him as “सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं ब्रह्म”—“Brahma (God) is Truth Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, and Infinite.”

Attracted by the love of His devotees and with a view to redeeming them, the Self-same Brahma manifests Itself as an embodied Being and appears before them. It is something beyond the range of human intellect to describe the manifest forms of the Lord which are innumerable. He manifests Himself in the same form in which a devotee likes to see Him. The Lord is not independent in the matter of assuming a particular form—

it is His loving devotee who is responsible for His manifestation. Arjuna, for example, expressed a desire to behold His celestial form in the first instance, then His celestial form endowed with four arms, and last of all His human form with two arms only. The Blessed Lord, in order to fulfil the desire of His beloved devotee, appeared before him in all these forms, successively within a short time and also divulged to him the Secret of His unmanifest aspect. In this way the devotee can visualize Him in whatever form he may be worshipping.

Hence it is not necessary to change the form of worship. In whatever form we worship Him, whether in that of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Nṛsiṁha (Man-lion), Śakti, Gaṇeśa or any other form, the object of worship is the self-same God. Nor is it necessary to make any alteration in the form of prayer. The only thing which requires to be changed is our conception of God, if it is narrow. A devotee should always remember that the God whom he worships pervades the whole universe, consisting of moving and motionless beings, in His unmanifest form; that He is omniscient and the overseer of all that is happening. He is all-wise, all-pervading, all-virtuous, all-powerful, the witness of all, all-existence, all-intelligence and Bliss personified. It is He who assumes different forms and plays different roles as a mere sport in conformity with the desires of His devotees and with a view to redeeming them. God is never invisible to such souls who have understood His true nature, nor does He ever lose sight of them.

The Lord Himself has said in the *Bhagavadgītā*—

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति॥

(VI.30)

“He who sees Me (the Universal Self) present in all

beings, and sees all beings existing in Me, I am never out of sight of him, nor is he ever out of sight of Me."

There is no material difference between the Manifest and Unmanifest aspects of God. It is the Unmanifest that becomes Manifest. The Lord says:—

अजोऽपि सनव्ययात्मा भूतानामीश्वरोऽपि सन्।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय सम्भवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

(Gītā IV.6)

"Though unborn and immortal, and also the Lord of all beings, I manifest Myself through My own Yogamāyā (divine potency), keeping my Nature (Prakṛti) under control."

One may ask why He takes a body. An answer to this question is furnished by the Lord Himself in the following words:—

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अध्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय सम्भवामि युगे युगे ॥

(Gita IV. 7-8)

"Arjuna, whenever there is decline of righteousness, and unrighteousness is in the ascendant, then I body Myself forth."

"For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of evil-doers, and for establishing Dharma (righteousness) on a firm footing, I am born from age to age."

In this way the Lord who is imperishable and immutable, is born in this world of His own free will, attracted by the love of His devotees and with a view to redeeming the world. He is an embodiment of love; every activity of His is inspired by love and compassion. He delivers those whom He slays. Even death at His hands is a token of His all-embracing love. But the ignorant world which does not realize the true significance of His mysterious incarnations and activities, entertains all sorts of doubts about Him. The Lord says—

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन॥

(Gita IV.9)

“Arjuna, My birth and activities are divine. He who knows this in reality does not take birth again on leaving his body, but attains Me.”

God Almighty who is Truth, Knowledge and Bliss personified, is unborn and imperishable, the ultimate goal and the supreme asylum of all beings; it is only with a view to the rehabilitation of the Divine Law and the deliverance of the world that He takes a personal form through His Yogamāyā. Hence there is no one so benevolent, so loving and such a reclaimer of the fallen as God. He alone who realizes this and thinking of Him constantly and with undivided love fares in this world free from attachment, knows Him in essence. Such an enlightened soul never returns to this mortal world, this “vale of tears.”

He alone is truly blessed who has come to realize the divine (दिव्य) nature of His incarnations and activities. The word ‘Divya’ in Sanskrit is variously rendered as ‘transparent’ (उज्ज्वल), ‘illuminating’ (प्रकाशमय), ‘transcendental’ (अलौकिक), ‘pure’ (विशुद्ध) and so on. All these virtues can be predicated of the incarnations and activities of the Lord. Stories of His activities gain currency in the world and impress every heart. They spread their lustre throughout the universe; nay, the hearts of even those who remember and recite them get purified and become transparent like crystal. Hence the activities of the Lord are termed as transparent (उज्ज्वल). The more they are broadcast the more effective they are in dispelling the darkness of ignorance. Where the exploits of the Lord are recounted daily, the whole atmosphere gets illumined by the rays of knowledge, and the darkness of sins and afflictions disappears. Hence it is that they are

called illuminating. The activities of the Lord, again, are not actuated by any selfish motive or self-interest or desire; they are free from all tinge of sin and all impurities. Hence they are called pure. No one can emulate His activities; even gods like Brahmā and Indra are infatuated by His actions. He brings within the region of possibility even that which cannot be conceived by the world at large, that which is impossible. He sometimes accomplishes even that which is improbable. He transcends even Jīvanmuktas (those who have been liberated from the trammels of birth and death even during their life-time) and Kāraka Puruṣas (representatives of God incarnated in the world like God Himself). Hence He is characterized as transcendent. His incarnations are pure in every respect. He manifests Himself by way of sport. He assumes a personal form which is an embodiment of love. Love constitutes His glorious form; hence those alone who are of a loving nature can recognize Him. Those fortunate beings who having realized this truth, worship Him with love are blessed with a sight of the loving countenance of Him who is all-love. Hence we should surrender our all—body, mind, intellect, nay, our very soul—at His lotus-like feet and remain absorbed in His thought day and night. We should always remember His loving command and assurance—

“Therefore, fix your mind on Me and establish your reason in Me alone; thereafter you will abide in Me. There is no doubt about it.”*

* मयेव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय।
निवसिष्यसि मयेव अत कृष्णं न संशयः॥

(Gītā XII. 8)

Rarity of Divine Knowledge

It is not possible for an enlightened soul to tell in right earnest even those who look upon him with reverence that he is enlightened for such an admission on the part of an enlightened soul would betray his ignorance. As a matter of fact, one who has got full faith in him would never ask him whether he is enlightened or not. One who asks such a question, should be regarded as lacking in faith, nay, such a question would surely bring harm to the questioner. For, should the enlightened soul declare that he is not enlightened or if he admits that he is enlightened, the faith of the questioner would be shaken in either case. Really speaking, no enlightened soul can make either of these assertions. For, if he says he is not enlightened, he will be guilty of making a false statement; and, if he says he is, he would be admitting plurality and thus betraying his lack of wisdom. He would therefore refuse to make any statement whatsoever on this point and would rather remain silent. This, however, does not mean that he does not really know God for, the Śruti says—

नाहं मन्ये सुवेदेति नो न वेदेति वेद च।
यो नस्तद्वेद तद्वेद नो न वेदेति वेद च॥
यस्यामतं तस्य मतं मतं यस्य न वेद सः।
अविज्ञातं विजानतां विज्ञातमविजानताम्॥

(Kenopaniṣad II. 2-3)

“I do not believe that I know God fully, not that I do not know Him, since I know Him. Whoever of us knows Him also knows that neither do I know nor do I know Him not.”

"God has been thought out by him who takes Him as unthought out whereas he who takes Him as thought out does not know Him. He is unknown to those who presume to know Him and is known to those who deny His knowledge."

Hence the position of an enlightened soul has been characterized as something indescribable (अनिर्वचनीय), hence it is that both kinds of statements as indicated above are found in the Vedas, and it is for this very reason that enlightened souls do not admit their having attained Divine Knowledge. Instead of offering their own remarks on the question, they simply refer the questioner to the verdict given on this point by the Vedas and other scriptures. They do not at the same time deny their having attained spiritual wisdom. It is hardly advisable even on the part of religious heads and spiritual leaders of mankind having an exemplary conduct, to make such disavowal inasmuch as it may lead their followers to despair of God-realization as something impossible of achievement. Suppose someone who is held in great esteem by the people today declares that he has not been able to realize God and that he himself hankers after that consummation, his followers will conclude that God-realization is something too high for them to attempt or hope to attain, or they may be led to believe that the assertion of the leader is either a deliberate misstatement of facts or at best is intended to disguise the truth. Both these suppositions may lower the leader in their estimation and weaken their faith in him. Hence silence is the only advisable course in such cases. A careful consideration of all these facts proves that an enlightened person can neither call himself wise nor not wise. Notwithstanding all this, should such an enlightened soul, while administering

spiritual knowledge to an aspirant to wisdom, assume himself to be wise in accordance with the latter's conception of himself and even call himself such, just in order to elucidate that point, no harm can accrue from such a behaviour on his part. Even such an assertion on his part is from the point of view of the aspirant only and he can take into confidence in such matters only one who has implicit faith in him and is supremely credulous, nay, who can assimilate the truth as soon as it is taught to him and readily place himself in the mental state which is held up to him as the ideal to be attained. Suppose someone has got the necessary amount of faith and credulity but nevertheless he does not reach the mental state he is expected to reach. It may be urged in such cases that the blame does not lie with the aspirant. Quite so; but at least this much is essential for the aspirant that he should have exclusive faith in one God, the one of whom he has heard from his Guru, and make up his mind to attain Him at all costs and not to rest content till he has done so. Just as one who is apprised of the existence of a treasure trove in his house through one who knows of it, is impatient to dig it out and, if some outsiders happen to be there, he sincerely wishes them gone and is anxious to take the earliest opportunity to obtain possession of the hidden treasure, similarly, a true aspirant is impatient to get rid of faults like attachment, ignorance etc., which hinder his spiritual progress, and is anxious to be brought face to face with God, who is his Supreme wealth, at the earliest moment. The more it is delayed the more impatient and restless he grows till he cannot brook any further delay. If an enlightened soul admits before such an aspirant even in unequivocal terms that he is enlightened no harm can come to the aspirant.

But, he does so before an aspirant of an inferior type or before one who does not love him fully, no harm can befall the enlightened soul himself who is immune from all harm, but spiritual harm is likely to come to the listener who is not yet qualified to be taken into confidence in such matters. Had such things been meant to be disclosed to anyone and everyone without distinction, they would not have been termed as secret in the scriptures, nor would they have been allowed to be communicated only to those who were qualified to receive them.

It may be asked here as to what is the test of an enlightened soul; since, if we recognize as unqualified person as our spiritual guide or teacher without duly testing him, this may lead to unfavourable results, according to the scriptures. The question is quite reasonable as also the note of warning sounded by the scriptures; but we can safely treat as our Guru or preceptor one whose company may induce faith in God, in that person himself as well as in the scriptures. Even if he has not attained perfection, he can surely lead us at least to the stage which he has himself attained (when considered from this point of view, intercourse with even those aspirants who live in the company of enlightened souls is desirable and profitable) and during the rest of the journey God Himself comes to his help and sees him through. The only thing that an aspirant is required to do is to betake himself solely and wholly to God. Everything can be accomplished by taking refuge in God. The Lord Himself says—

अनन्याशिचन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते।
तेषां नित्याभियुक्तानां योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्॥

(Gītā IX.22)

"Those devotees however who knowing no one else constantly think of Me, and worship Me in a disinterested way, to those ever-united in thought with Me, I bring full security and personally attend to their needs."

Even in our worldly affairs we find that one who solely depends on another is looked after in every way by the latter, just as a child so long as it is entirely dependent on its mother is cared for and guarded against all dangers by the mother. So long as the child does not attain maturity and assert its independence, it is solely dependent on its parents; and so long as it depends on its parents the whole responsibility in respect of it rests with the parents. Even so everything can be accomplished by solely depending on God. Of course, the act of surrender has to be performed by the aspirant. Once he has surrendered himself to the Lord the latter assumes the whole responsibility in respect of him. Hence everyone who aspires after his spiritual welfare must take refuge in God.

The Ineffable State of a Jñānī

Just as the mind does not withdraw from lying, violence, sexual indulgence and so on even after they have been decried by reason, even so the mind refuses to submit to the verdict of intellect, reached through analytical reasoning, declaring the world to be merely conceptual or ideal. There is a stage in the life of a Sādhaka when such a thing happens. The Sādhaka describes such a mood by saying that the world is a mere idea according to the verdict of his reason. Latter on, when the mind also accepts the verdict of reason, the Sādhaka begins to look upon the world as mere idea. But even now the Sādhaka only conceives the world to be ideal; he does not realize it as such. Subsequently, when, as a result of continued mental practice, he actually begins to perceive the world a conceptual, the world appears to him sometimes as a shadow, while at other times it ceases to appear even as a shadow. Just as one, who due to defective vision, perceives threadlike streaks of golden light in the sky where there are none, is cognizant of the fact that there is no such object in the sky and that the streaks only appear without any corresponding reality, even so it makes no difference to such a Sādhaka whether the world appears to him as a mere shadow or does not appear at all. At no time and in no wise does the world appear to him as real. Such a stage in the life of a Sādhaka has been designated as “अकल्पित स्थिति” (the actual stage of experience). This is known as the third stage of wisdom; but even in this stage the perceiver of experience of such a stage persists. A Sādhaka who has reached this stage is apt to err in his worldly dealings on account of intense mental exertion. But reaching the fourth stage of God-realization one is not likely

to commit such errors. One who has reached that stage efficiently discharges all his legitimate duties in the natural course as an automaton, without any conscious effort. The Lord has well said in the *Gītā*—

“He whose undertakings are all free from desire and thoughts of the world, and whose actions are burnt up by the fire of wisdom, him even the wise call a sage.”*

Even in the fifth stage of ‘illumination’ one is likely to err in his worldly dealings, with this difference that whereas the mood of the Sādhaka in the third plane is acquired, that of the Sādhaka in this plane is spontaneous. The third stage is followed by ‘Realization,’ which is only another name of ‘Liberation’ (मुक्ति). The followers of certain faiths and creed such as Jainism etc., believe in salvation after death only; but our Vedānta admits the possibility of attaining salvation even during one’s life-time. Saving knowledge or enlightenment can be acquired even before death. The distinct personality of one who has attained this state as well as the actions proceeding therefrom exist only in the eyes of others. There is no individual ego left to identify itself with them. It may be asked here as to how activity is possible in an organism without the presence of a conscious agent or doer. In reply to this it is stated that the Universal Ego (समस्ति चेतन) is present there all the same; the Ego which identified itself with a part has now expanded itself and embraced the whole—merged itself into the pure Ego. And the motive power for activity is supplied by this pure Ego without any obstruction or hindrance. It may be further objected that the Universal or Pure Ego is present in dead bodies and inert matter as well—why then, is there no

* यस्य सर्वे समारम्भाः कामसंकल्पवर्जिताः ।
ज्ञानग्निदाधकर्माणं तमाहुः पण्डितं बुधाः ॥

activity in the latter? Our reply to this is that want of the inner sense or faculty (अन्तःकरण) is responsible for the absence of activity in dead bodies and inanimate objects. Should a Yogi be able to multiply his Citta (mind) and introduce it into a dead body or inanimate object, activity can be infused into such a body or object as well.

Now, if one asks who receives enlightenment (ज्ञान), we find no answer to this question. If the body is said to be illumined, the statement would not be compatible with reason; for it is not possible for a physical body to get spiritually illumined. If the Jīva (individual Ego) be called enlightened, the statement would be equally incongruous; for the Ego can no longer be called a Jīva after enlightenment. If, on the other hand, we apply the epithet 'wise' to the Pure Ego, the statement would be equally preposterous, as the Pure Ego was never 'unwise.' Hence it cannot be definitely stated as to who is wise.

The concept of an enlightened soul exists in the mind of a person who has not yet reached the stage of enlightenment—in the eyes of the Pure Ego none else exists. An enlightened soul has no objective vision—how, then, can the world exist for him ? Only those who are yet far from enlightenment imagine that the soul inhabiting a particular body has merged into the Universal Spirit—that the portion of the Universal Ego which has the mind superimposed on it, along with the mind, is termed as the enlightened soul. Who in reality receives the epithet 'enlightened' nobody can say with the help of his speech, for in the eyes of an enlightened Soul enlightenment itself does not exist. The terms 'enlightened' and 'unenlightened' exist only for the edification of the world and the concept of enlightenment also resides in the mind of unenlightened souls only. Similar is the value of attempts made at defining the term Guṇātīta (one who

has transcended the range of three Guṇas or attributes). As a matter of fact, how can any distinguishing traits (लक्षण) exist in one who has transcended the three Guṇas. Such distinguishing traits inhere in the mind and every function of the mind is of the nature of the three Guṇas. The fact is that recourse is taken to the method of marking out the distinctive nature of the functions of the mind of a Guṇātīta in order to understand what is meant by the term. *Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā* characterizes a Guṇātīta thus—

“Arjuna, he who feels no aversion to light (which is born of Sattva) or activity (which is born of Rajas) or stupor (which is born of Tamas), when they are present and does not long for them when they are absent.”*

The Lord has further discussed the characteristics of a Guṇātīta in the succeeding verses, viz., verses 23, 24 and 25 also. In the verse reproduced above the word “light” (प्रकाश) should be taken to mean transparency of mind and the cognitive sense, activity (प्रवृत्ति) should be construed to mean voluntary effort (चेष्टा), and ‘stupor’ (मोह) should be interpreted as the tendency to sleep, lethargy or (आलस्य) (not ignorance or moral delinquency) or a state very similar to profound sleep in the matter of worldly knowledge. Since there is no ego identifying itself with the mind, in whom will ‘abhorrence’ (द्वेष) and longing (इच्छा) inhere? The very fact of the mind being free from attachment and aversion (रग—द्वेष), delight and sorrow (हर्ष—शोक), and such other pairs of opposites prove that there is no ego identifying itself with the mind. Had the Universal Ego been tied with the mind, it would have been possible for the latter to manifest evil propensities like attachment and aversion and

* प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव।
न द्वेष्टि सम्प्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति॥

so on. But the Universal Ego is never tied with the mind— It simply lends motive power to the mind. All these distinguishing traits, too persist only so long as the world continues to make its impression upon our mind, and these are ideal traits to be imbibed by the Sādhaka. Hence it is that they find mention in the Śāstras.

The real position of a Guṇatīta can neither be understood nor described by anyone else— it can only be felt by those who have attained that position. Should anyone apply the tests to himself with a view to satisfying himself whether he answers such tests or not, he should be understood as devoid of wisdom. The very fact that he is in search of distinguishing traits proves that he is tied to the body, that he still maintains his distinctiveness from Brahma, otherwise there can be no separate investigator nor can he maintain a distinct position. Again, if he is keen on discovering such traits, why should he seek for them in a particular body alone? What prevents him for seeking for them in rocks and trees? The fact that he confines his quest to the body alone proves that he still identifies himself with the body. He has thus belittled himself already. Of course, if the Sādhaka detaches himself from the body (i.e. looks on the body as a spectator) and compares it with rocks and trees, this comparison may prove beneficial to him, The *Gītā* says—

“When the seer does not see any agent other than the three Guṇas and knows Me, who stand beyond these Guṇas, he enters into My Being.”*

But he, too, who says that he has not yet received enlightenment is not enlightened; for he expressly says so. Even so he who claims to have received enlightenment

* नान्यं गुणेभ्यः कर्तारं यदा द्रष्टानुपश्यति ।
गुणेभ्यश्च परं वेति मद्भावं सोऽधिगच्छति ॥

should not be recognized as enlightened; for the profession of wisdom proves the existence of three separate entities, viz., the knower, knowledge and the object known. And he, too, who expresses a doubt on this point is not enlightened; for such a doubt cannot exist in the mind of one who has actually received enlightenment. What, then, should an enlightened person say on this point? We get no answer to this question. That is why the position of an enlightened soul has been called ‘indescribable’ (अनिवर्चनीय) .

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